## APOLOGI

# Mr. Thomas Rhind.

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An Account of the Manner how, and the Reafons for which he feparated from the Presbyterian Party, and embraced the Communion of the Church.

- Thest. 5. 21. Prove all Things: hold fast the which is good.
- Pet. 3. 15.—And be ready always to give an Answer to every Man that asketh you a Reason of the Hope that is in you, with Meek ness and Fear.

Arnob. Advers. Gent. Lib. 2. Cum nobis intenditis aversionem a Religione priorum, causam convenit, ut inspiciatis non fastum nec quid reliquerimus opponere, sed secuti quid simus posissimum contueri. Nam si mutare sententiam culpa est ulla vel crimen. S a veteribus constitutis in alias res novas voluntates que migrare; criminatio ista vos spessat qui toties vitam consuetudinemque mutastis, qui in mores alios atque alios ritus, priorum condemnatione transstis.

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### PREFACE

OME Tears ago, when the Church was under severe Presjures in thu Nation, and when there were small Hopes of a Deliverance; a forcible Conviction, which was the Refult of an impartial Enquiry, determin'd me to abandon the Presbyterian Party, among whom I might have reasonably expected Encouragement, and to embrace the Communion of the Suffering Church. when I was sure that I should share liberally of its Persecutions; and indeed they have fully convinced me fince, that my Apprehensions were too well founded. For to speak the whole in a Word, they have run over and exhaufted all their Common-places of Slander against me, not only in their Courts, but among People to whom I could not have Access to acquaint them with the Manner and Reasons of my Conduct; and therefore that that venerable Body which I have fo happily joyned, might not be reproach'd on my Account; that I might not be wanting in that Charity

Charity which I owe the Presbyterians, who are fo unreasonably scandalized at my Change; and that I might do Justice to my own Reputation, I at length found my self obliged to offer

this publick Apology to the World.

And as my Conscience does bear me witness, so I perswade my self that the Narrative will convince the candid Reader, that I proceeded in my Enquiry with all due Impartiality : Some may perhaps complain of its Length, but I affure them, that I meant something else than to add to the Number of my Pages. I knew that what chair ned so many to that Party, were the groundless Prejudices which they entertain'd in behalf of their own Way, and against those of the Episcopal Side: And therefore I thought, that could I prevail with them; after my Example, so far to remove their Prejudices, as to use the like Enquiry, they would soon be brought to the like Conviction. And as the rational Endeavours Infed, in Order to find the Truth, did entitle me to make the happy Discovery; so I hope the Arguments I have advanced, will convince the Knowing Reader that I have found it. For if the Prebyterian Government be Schifmatical; if their Articles of Faith, be false, pernicious, &c. if their Worship be scandalonsly corrupt as to the Matter, and highly imperfect as to the Manner; and if their Spirit be diametrically opposite to the Spirit of the Gofpel; all which I have endeavoured to prove: Then will it, I hope, be allowed, that I, not only lave-

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lawfully might, but necessarily must have separated from them, and as necessarily should have embraced the Communion of the Church, where I

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In the Management of the whole, I have used that Plainness of Stile & Thought, and have linked my Arguments after that Manner, which would render this Essay the more useful and familiar to all Sorts of Readers. And the I have confulted the respective Originals for the Authorities which I advance; yet have I industriously avoided that Pedantick Shew of Learning, of studding my Margin with Authors, or interlarding my Paragraphs with Greek and Latin . The few I have addaced are in plain English, which they who are curious, or suspect the Exactues. of the Translation, may consult in the original Authors; while the most ordinary Reader may affure himself that I have not imposed upon him. I have indeed made use of the first Edition of Dr. Wakes Translation of St. Ignatius's Epiftles; but after having compared it with the second (to which I could not at first have access) I find no Alteration made that can weaken the Force of my Inferences.

I am well apprysed, that the Presbyterians who complained so much of my Apostacy (as they called my Separation) will upbraid me much more for this Vindication; I'll cheerfully compound for all the hard Names they can give me, if I can escape so easily; for nothing they can say (no, not the

most scurrilous) willmove me; nor will it Ibelieve much affect any Man of Sense, who may chance to bear me abused: For however their railing Accusations might have past for Transports of Holy Zeal some Years ago, yet has twenty Years Tryal of the Party, taught the best Part of the Nation, to disregard them now, as Words of Course.

I shall only add, that if any shall think sit to disprove this Apology, I assure them that if their Answer be satisfying, I'll return to the Party; and if it be not, I'll acquaint them discreetly (provided they use me civilly) why I am not satisfied: But if in stead of a rational Answer they revite me, and offer to deceive the Reader with forged Stories and Misrepresentations of Facts; they'll confirm me (who am so fully convinced of the Honesty of my Intentions) in my Aversion against their Way, which cannot support it self but by Calumny and Slander; and they'll give me a further Occasion to vindicate my self, and to expose them yet more fully to the World.

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IS no new Thing in the World, for Men to have different Apprehentions concerning Religion. All Ages have afforded too many Instances of those, who have differed from one another, and not a few of such, as have differed from themselves, that is, of those who have altered the religious Opinions, of which they were once fond.

This is a Practice, which, in the Main, cannot be condemned by any; otherwise I see not why Abraham, who for sook the Chaldean Idolatries, should not be branded as a Backsider; why the Apostles should not pass for so many Changelings; or why the Instruments of the Reformation should not have the like or a

worse Imputation fix'd upon them.

All Parties are agreed, that a Man should renounce Error; or, (which is the same upon the Matter) what he is convinced, is such: And I have always found, that he, whom the abandoned Party have doom'd to Damnation as a wicked Apostate, has been hugg'd by others as a Proselyte, worthy of all Welcome: Nor is there any thing strange in this; it being too ordinary with the most of Men, to love those A. 2.

who are of the same Opinions with them; and that for no other Reason, but because they chance to think as they do; and to hate thole, who differ from them, especially if they were once of the same Perswasion with them; this being a tacite Reproach upon their Judgements. who still maintain Opinions of which the other feem to be alhamed. So that it is not, what is suggested, by the Prejudices of the interested Parties ( whom either a Man has forfaken, or may have joyned) that ought to be regarded in this Case: They are both Parties, and therefore Judges incomperent in that Respect. But that which is incumbent upon one in these Circumstances, is to satisfy his own Conscience, and to endeavour to convince the unprejudiced World, that he acted with an honest Intention. and upon full Conviction: This is the feast which he owes to his own Reputation. This he is bound to do for their Sake whom he has for laken, and has so much offended by his Change, that they may, from the Confiderat tion of the Arguments, which he offers against their Errors, be engaged, if possible, to renounce them; Or if this be too much to be hop'd for from the tough Prejudices of some Men; they must be still suffered to think, that he has exchanged Truth for Error, yet should he endeavour to perswade them into so much Charity as will make them believe, that what shey think he has done amils, was rasher his Mis-

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Misfortune than his Fault; and this, those of that Communion which he has embraced, are prefumed to expect, that they may know whether he understands the Nature of their Society: or was determined to enter into it; by the Force of these Reasons, which, they think, give it the Preference to that which he has forfaken. And therefore, feeing it is my Cafe. to have made open Brofession of Principles. which I have as openly renounced, and so have been once of a Party, which I have at last abandoned. I find my felf put upon a Necelfity of offering this publick Apology to the World, that I may fatisfy all, who are not sefolved upon the Contrary, that I have proceed. ed in this Affair with Sincerity, and was determined by Arguments sufficient to warrant such a Change.

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Tis true, it is the Prerogative of the Omnificient alone, to know the Honesty of Men's Intentions; and tis likewise true that, as too many owe their being of a false Religion to their Prejudices, so others pass from the true Religion to a salse, for unworthy Ends, and without having any Regard to Conscience or Truth. So that 'tis hard for the most observing and indifferent Persons to guess when Men act sincerely, and when not. But when I declare that I was influenced by a pure Love to Truth and the glory of God, when I attest the Searcher of Hearts, that I did what I thought right in

it felf, and did it with a Delign of making my felf happy and pleafing God: 'Tis impossible to pass any charitable Judgment on the Intentions of Men, or elfe they must judge favourably of me. Nay, when I have told them. after what Manner I have proceeded (if they have not too much of the Spirit of a Party ) they will find themselves obliged in Justice to do fo. And the rather, that my Account of that Manner shall be delivered with as much Sincerity as shall be these Words, with which I hope to commend my Soul at last to God. And as to the Arguments which I thall alledge, as they have fatisfied me, and all those with whom I have had Occasion to discourse ( with Respect to the Reasonableness of my Change ) so I am hopeful that all impartial and judicious Readers will find them abundantly satisfying.

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But before I proceed to give an Account of the Manner and Reasons of my Conduct, 'tis fit the Reader should know, that I owe my Birth to Presbyterian Parents, who, to be sure, stampt my Soul with early Impressions, in Favour of their own Principles and Party; and against all the opposite Sects, of whatever Denomination, especially those of the Episcopal way, who were best known to, and most seared by them: And, no doubt, they took Care, that these Prejudices which I had suckt from the Breasts, should receive considerable Additions, as I advanced in Years. For of what Per-

Perswasion could I be, while under the In spection of my Parents, and before I could choose for my felf, but of the same with them and whom could I love or hate, but such as were the Objects of their Love or Hatred, who gave me daily Proofs of their Affection for me. Upon their Death, the Principles of my Pasents, and the zealous Inclinations for their Way, which my Education had wrought in my felf) readily recommended me to the kind Acceptance of the Presbyterian Party. And here I cannot, without being justly liable to the Imputation of the most horrid Ingratitude, conceal the Obligations they have brought me under. I can never forget the Kindnesses they have done me . And it is my daily Prayer to Almighty GOD, that it may please Him fo to order the Course of his Providence, that I may be in Case to return their Favours upon them? though in the mean Time, they must suffer me to complain of their Cruelty, who load me ( as they have done in a formal Libel) with the Guilt of the worst of all Crimes; especially confidering that their being in fuch Rourishing Circumstances, is that which makes mine fo bad, and which hinders my giving them more valuable Expressions of my Sense of their Kindness than that of Words. Ingratitude is certainly the worst of Crimes, or, if ye will, it is them all; so that did I think I were justly chargeable with it, I would own my felf unworthy

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phat Perto live. But I cannot be perswaded, and I hope none will think, that one, who is willing to ferve his old Friends with every thing but his Conscience, is chargeable with it. And that is the Case with me.

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And if now that I am none of theirs; and if after having received to many Discourtesies from them, I do still entertain a grateful Reference of their Favours, imagine how deep the Impression must have been, and how much I would be prejudicate in their Behalf, when actually allowed very liberal Expressions of their Favour and Esteem.

And though I know it cannot be alledged; that it was Interest which determined me their Way (my Education having done that Business before) yet must it be owned a very considerable Prejudice in Favour of what one thinks Truth, that it has Interest of its Side.

Thus you see I was chain'd to that Party by the most powerful Prejudices; besides what Influence their best Arguments ( with which ye need not doubt they had furnish'd me ) may be supposed to have had towards determining the Conscience of one in my Circumstances.

All which put together, makes me the less ashamed to own, what they have so often upbraided me with, since (what they are pleased to call) my Apostacy; that I was a Zealot at mong them, and profited in that way (as St. Paul

Paulsays of himself in a Case much the same above many of my Fellows. Let them lay that I was a Presbyterian of the most rigid Kind, and I shall be so far from being displeafed at, that I will thank them for it. For this only proves that I went all the Length of what I was convinced to be Truth . And the greater Clamour they raise about this, they are at to much the more Pains to convince the World. that I was an honest Man, while among them and now that I have left them, I must needs have made some Discoveries about them, which I could not reconcile with Truth nor Honesty, and therefore for fook them. Besides, they make it probable, that I do, at least as fincerely, believe and will as zealoufly affert the Principles; which I have now embraced (without any, nay, contrary to many Prejudices, and upon rational Conviction) as I did those which were purely the Refult of my Prejudices, and were imposed upon me, when I could not possibly choose for my felf : Than which, nothing am I perfuaded will more effectually recommend me to that facred Society, of which am I now fo happily a Member; and this, Courteous Reader; puts me in Mind of acquainting you, after what Manner I became fuch; which was as follows. When I had arrived at a competent Age, in fome lucky Minute, my Thoughts fuggetted to me the Reasonableness of inquiring into my O-

pinions about Things; and how I came by them.

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A very flender Inquiry fatisfied me, as to the one; for I found my mind crowded with Opinions: But the other was a Subject of a nicer Difquilition; and therefore, that I might know how I came by these Opinions, I was obliged to begin my Search a little higher. In which Search, tho' I was foon convinced that the Knowledge of Truth was attainable, yet was I perswaded that it was not so ordinary and easy Purchase, as I had once imagined. For I found, that in Order to make the happy Difcovery, one must shake off a great many Prejudices, and ought to proceed with the utmost Intention and Deliberation of Thought: Though at the same Time, I saw Men too fond of their Prejudices, and too much in Love with their Fase to hope for this, but from a very few: Nay, I observed in Fact, that the most of Men daily past rash Judgments, and that those whom I could not deny to be otherwise reasonable, were funk in Prejudices, with Respect to some particular Opinions.

Thus, when I found that the Search after Truth was so difficult, and knew many (whom I could not deny to be good and great) actually deceived in their Apprehensions about it; notwithstanding all my Fondness for my Opinions, I entered into some Doubt about the Exactness and Impartiality of my Enquiries: Nor could I forbear to suspect that one of my small Compass of Thought and Experience might possibly

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be mistaken. And in Order to discover my Spirit the better, in Matters of greater Importance, I thought fit to make the first Experiment in somePhilosophicalPoints. I immediately brought one or more of my speculative Principles under an Examen. In which, I endeavoured to work my Mind into that Aquilibrium of Thought. and to proceed with that Exactness of Inquiry, so much recommended by all reasonable Men in the Search after Truth. But upon as impartial and accurate an Examination as I could possibly make, I was fully convinced. that what I had formerly admitted upon ( what I supposed) a scientifick Evidence, was in it self absolutely false. This checkt my Confidence a little; and upon this, I thought it reasonable to try, whether the other Opinions which I had gone into, and particularly my religious ones were not as ill founded. And I was the rather moved to this, that I found it universally agreed upon, that Religion was the most important Affair in the World; a Mistake about which, I was convinced, would not only argue the Impersection of my Understanding, but would likewise have a bad Influence on my eternal Happiness: Which Considerations, as they did produce in me a rational Doubting, with Respect to these religious Opinions, to which (I was conscious) I had yielded too implicite an Assent; so they likewise excited me to the

more diligent Search about that, upon which

I found so much did depend.

Nor do I think that any, who have the least Freedom of Thought, will blame this discreet Scepticism: Nor can the most Dogmatick condemn me with any shew of Reason, when I have told them, that I wrought my Soul into this Suspence, in Order to judge the more narrowly of Things, and even to confirm me in my old Principles, in case I should find them to be true.

It argues too much Suspicion of the Truth of a Principle, or the Goodness of a Cause, to refuse its being brought to a fair Trial; and I don't fee, how one can well judge, when Matters are once brought into Doubt, without a perfect Indifference, whether for a Principle or Party. For is it not upon this indifferent and equitable Consideration of the Merits of what is contended for by both Parties, that the Justice of any Sentence is univerfally granted to be founded? And as this was the Nature and Defign of my Scepticism; fo I was not affraid to extend it to these Points that are reckoned Fundamental. For I thought that if it was at all reasonable to doubt, in Order to attain to the more perfect Knowledge of the Truth, it was most of all so, when Matters of the greatest Importance were to be enquired into.

Thus I was led in the first Place to examine the essential Articles of Religion; concerning which, all I think proper to say at present, is,

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that, after the most impartial and accurate Examination, that I was able to make, I was rationally perswaded about the Truth of a natural Religion; and did, upon what I thought fufficient Motives of Credibility, acquiesce in the Revelation, which God had made: And I was particularly fatisfied about the Truth of that last, and greatest Discovery of his Will, which God vouchfafed to make to the World, by Jefus Christ and his Apostles. This I found to be one, uniform and unalterable Rule of Faith and Manners to all Christians; and thus far, all of that

Denomination seem'd to agree.

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But when I reflected upon the almost infinite Variety of Opinions which plagud the World, notwithstanding this Rule, and that Multiplicity of Sects, into which Christians were form'd, (all pretending to the true Faith:) you may imagine how much I must be embarrass'd, and to how great an Uncertainty I was reduced, whom to believe in the Right, among fo maby Pretenders. And indeed, on this Occasion, conceiv'd fuch an Indignation at the Folly nd Contention of Christians, about what Christ nd his Apostles must be supposed to have rerealed themselves clearly, that I had given over Il further Engiry in this Matter (which I faw mproven to little other Purpole, but to be he Subject of Debates that were never like to nd) had not the love of Truth, and aPerswasion hat my Happiness did depend upon the Disco-MCIY.

very of the Truths of Christianity, in particular, oblig'd me to pursue it . In which Pursuit, I did not conceive my felf reasonably oblig'd to enquire into all the Opinions, which each Parer or particular Person had broach'd; for, at this Rate, I had probably ended my Days before I had formed my Confession of Faith; and perhaps by enquiring too narrowly into the Principles of each Sect had died of no Sect or Communion at all. But that which I thought would answer my Design best, would be toexamine, only the Pretentions of the most considerable Parties, with whom the other Sects (which were but Sub-divisions from them) must fland or fall of Course; and these I reckoned those of the Roman Catholick and and Protestant Perfwafions.

The Church of Rome, I found to be a Society of a very large Extent, of a long Standing, and fueh as had produc'd not a few wife and great Men, who had written many bulky Volumes in Behalf of their Faith, and that very plaufibly too. This I thought challeng'd Regard for them, and was fufficient to perswade me that their Cause deserved a fair Tryal; besides, their Pretence to Infallibility was enough to engage the Curiolity of an Enquirer after Truth, to bry if he could be reasonably convinced of the Frush of a Principle, which would fave him al further Trouble. With these Thoughts. an without these horrid Prejudices, which they say ard

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are entertained by Protestants against them, I entered upon a serious Examination of all that is commonly adduced for or against the Roman Catholick Way: The Result of which, in short, was, that tho' I had been convinced of the Truth of all the Articles of Pope Pius's Creed, (which you may think, would argue a strong Faith, and a great deal of Violence offer'd to my Reason) yet could I never be perswaded, that the damning of all who did not believe as I did, should be a Condition of my Salvation.

In a word, the absque qua fide, &c. which they had made a Term of Communion, and an Article of their Faith, was so choaking, that it would not believe for me: And as the Disbelief of this one Article, would hinder their receiving me into their Communion; so indeed, this alone abundantly convinced me, that I should never enter into it. When I had thus fatif. fied my Conscience, that I might be safely without the Communion of the Church of Rome; and had fortified my felf sufficiently against its Pretence to Infallibility, and the Bugbear of its Excommunications: I was encouraged to renew my Enquiry, when I found it contracted to a narrower Compass, and had some Asfurance, that I should among some one Party of Protestants, if at all, soon find some rest for the fole of my Foot. These indeed I saw unhappily canton'd into too many Sects; which feem'd to render my Labour the more difficult: However I thought

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thought it reasonable, in the first Place, to exal mine the Pretentions of the two prevailing Parties, who had contended for Truth with fo much Heat in Britain; I mean those of the Episcopal and Presbyterian Perswasions. For I thought that the Discovery, I was in Search of, was as likely to be made among them, as among the smaller Branches: And if I should happily find here, what I so earnestly defir'd, it faved me fo much Labour: And the Truth is, I was fo fufficiently wearied already, that, as in this Case I needed not, so I desired to go no farther. But before I enter'd upon a strict Examination of the Merits of either Cause, in Order to know who was in the Right, and in which of the Societies I should best secure my Salvation; (for it was faid by both, that no less did depend upon the Enquiry ) I began to reflect seriously on the State of my Mind, and to ask my Conscience, whether I was endued with that Ability, and these Dispositions competent in so important an Affair: And whether I had shaken off these Prejudices, which are fo great Hindrances in an Inquest after Truth. As to the one, I had been already convinced, that God was to be worshipped; and seeing he had bleffed the World with a Revelation of his Will, doubtless it contain'd Directions concerning the Manner, after which he would have himfelf served; so that any who sought, might readily find them there. And seeing I found my felf

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self endued with an Appetite after Happiness, and a forward Disposition of pleasing God; in Order to attain the same, I was very sure, that, if I duly enquired after it, I could not fail to

make the Discovery I desired.

As to the other, viz. my Prejudices, I found, that tho' I had attained to a considerable Freedom of Spirit, and had well nigh wrought my Judgement into a just Suspence, with Respect to the Merits of either Cause; yet is there a secret and unaccountable Inclination, by which Men are tyed faster to the Religion of their Education, and the Principles they have been long perswaded of, than by the Arguments which are advanced for them: As on the other hand, there is a no less groundless Aversion for whatever is opposite thereto. But to know, is enough to cure this Folly; and that being my Case, I easily removed it.

I found withal, that Power and Interest were with the one Party, as Persecution and Want were the Lot of the other. Now, though I hope sew are so base as to preser Interest to Truth, when they think they are once in Possession of it; or so ungenerous, as to decline Persecution, when 'tis inevitable, for what they were long perswaded to be the Truth; yet possibly when one is not confirmed in, but is only searching after it, if the Arguments of the suffering Side, be not discernibly more weighty, Prosperity may insensibly give a wrong Cast to

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the Scales, and perhaps determine the Advantage to that Side, by which a Man will be best rewarded. This I was aware of, and accordingly resolved to guard against it. Neither did I find, that the Disquisition which I was to enter upon, and the Change that might possibly follow upon it, could be reckoned the Effects of a vain Curiofity, or of a capricious Love to change. If I may be supposed capable of reflecting upon the Movements of my Soul, I am fure this was not my Cafe: I knew very well, that I was too inconfiderable to hope to stand by my self, or to gain a Following: Nor was I Fool enough to expect, that I should be reckoned any confiderable Addition to that Party, which I might happen to join. Beside, they who affect Singularity beat an untrodden Path: either by reviving ancient Herefies, or, by broaching Opinions unheard of before: Whereas all my Defign was only to discover these Truths, and to find out that Society, in the Possession of which, and in Communion with whom, I should most acceptably serve God. Nor did I find my felf fo fond of Change, as to change for Changing's fake: This is what none but a mad Man would be guilty of, especially when those from whom the Change is made, are in Circumstances that may tempt his Constancy, whereas, those to whom it is made, are in a Condition, which may sufficiently discourage fuch a Change.

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Nor was I finally to be byassed into the Principle by any Pity for the Susserings of its Professors: This indeed might have excited me, to the utmost of my Power, to have contributed towards their Relief, this they much wanted, and as Men and Christians deserved it. But I am sure, I would never stretch my Generosity so far, as to put my self in bad Circumstances, because others were so. This were no Favour done them, and it would but declare my self a Fool.

Upon the whole, and after the most diligent Search, that I was able to make into the Thoughts of my Heart, there was no other Prejudice that I could discover, or that I could suppose would be charged upon me by others to impose upon my Judgment in this Affair. My Adversaries will perhaps alledge some; about which I can say nothing, until I know what they are: Nay, there may be really some Prejudices surking in my Soul; for the Spirit of Man has its hidden Recesses which conceal the Springs of very considerable Actions; but if there be any such in my Breast, they are unknown to me, after the most narrow Enquiry, that I could make, to find them.

And after all this, I addressed the God of all Truth, and the Father of Lights, to remove what ever Prejudices might be latent in my Soul, and to direct me to, and assist me in the Use of these Means that would most effectually lead

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me to the Knowledge of these Truths; upon o h the right Understanding of which, and fuit- soly able Practice, God's Glory and my Happiness with

did so much depend.

Thus prepared, I began my Enquiry with hear that which all Christians pretend to reverence, Aut and to which the contending Parties to confi- their dently appeal. I did read the old and new Testa- with ment ( which is the Book you know I mean ) lete all over, which I thought the most impartial, cou and perhaps ready Way to discover, what I so the much wanted to know; it being much more No probable, that a Reader shall better reach the the Sense of a Book, when he takes its History serv and general Scope under one View, than when wer he confiders it in its difmembred Shreds: For whi though this latter was the more commonWay; furt yet could not I reconcile my felf to it. For I my found, that when a Text stood alone, it was read eafily mastered : People made short Work free with it, for they put it to the Rack, and made the it fay what it never meant. gust

Next, I consider'd, that seeing the ancient rec Fathers could not be denyed to be good and rev great Men; nay, finding it confessed, that un- and common Measures of the divine Spirit were wh allowed fome of them; and withal, confidering gre they lived so near the Days of the Apostles, I not thought they might know as much about the fan true Religion as any others, at least, that their Testimony could not be rejected, with Respect

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on o Matters of Fact, without disparaging that it oly Religion, which they fo much adorned ess with their Lives, and for which they at last del ivered themselves up unto the Death. ith heard lofty Elogies bestowed on some later ce. Authors, and had been often defired to read fi- their Books; so that I found my Friends ( notha withstanding their specious Pretence of being ial, could admire Men and their Writings, when fo hey favoured themselves, as much as others. ore Now when I confidered that the first Lights of the the christian Church, modestly speaking, deory ferved as much Regard, and that their Writings ien were as well worth the Perusal, as those For which they admired. And when I considered y; further, that they who had the Direction of r I my Studies, never recommended to me the was reading, so much as of one Father; nay, had ork frequently heard them talk contemptibly of ide them and their Works (excepting still St. Augustine's Books of Predestination and Grace. ) I ent reckoned this a shrewd Presumption, that these ind reverend Gentlemen, were not Presbyterians, an- and for that Reason only were cast; than ere which, in my Opinion, there could not be a ng greater Obligation put upon their Adversaries, nor a Differvice done themselves; for a thouhe fand to one that Cause will be lost, against which these witnesses declare themselves before impartial Judges. And I could not but won-

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der how the Presbyterians came to act so un-wise a Part, as to condemn the venerable Monuments of Antiquity: For if the Fathers be fel for them, I must fay they do not treat their led Friends well; but if they be against them (which He is more probable) I do not wonder that they this do not commend them, though at the fame me time I think 'tis Folly to condemn them and of their Writings; for the more they do this, the me more will Mens Curiosity be raised to know Re what they were, and what their Writings for do contain. And this I must confess ( together see with the abovemention'd Considerations ) St contributed very much to engage me in the det reading of their Works; especially those of the did three first Ages. In which Course of reading, I love narrowly observed, whatever could serve to determine the Controversies in hand. Then tri I read what the Contravertists of both Sides tia had written upon all the Subjects in Debate. 4. In which I was so scrupulously exact, that I of do not remember any Author of any Name the whom I have not perused, excepting Salmasius les his Walo Messalinus, which I could not possibly wh come by. But I have understood fince, Dr that my Misfortune, in that Respect, was retrieved by the reading of those, who have writ- m ten, fince his Time, upon the same Subject; they ta having but transcribed from him, from Blondel, and from Stilling fleet in his Irenicum, all the Testimonies of Antiquity which they alledge. Tis

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Tis true, I might have reasonably saved my be felf much of this Labour; but my Curiofity neir led me to know, whatever was written on the ich Head of Government. And I put my felf to hey this Trouble; the rather, that I might be the me more capable of making a reasonable Choice and of those whom I should find to have perforthe med to best Purpose, in order to take a serious low Review of their Writings; and upon Trial I ngs found, and in this Judgment both Parties her feem'd to be of Accord with me, that the Stress of the Controversy (as far as one could the determine about it, from their several Books ) the did depend upon the Performances of the folg, I lowing Authors.

Such as on the Presbyterian Side, Beza, De hen triplici Episcopatu. Blondelli Apologia pro sentendes tia Hieronymi. Didoclavii Altare Damascenum cap. ite. 4. pag. 82. &c. edit. nov. Prinn's unbishoping I of Timothy and Titus. The London Ministers me their Jus divinum regiminis Ecclefiastici. And fins least they should think that I do not know bly whom they esteem, I add the Lucubrations of ce, Dr. Rule, Mrs. Jameson and Forrester.

On the Episcopal Side, I could not so easily rit- make a Choice; for upon my short Acquainhey tance with the Authors of that way, I found del, them all to be Men of Discretion and Sense; the fo that should I name all whom I thought to have acted their Part handsomely, I should have Tis none unnamed. But they who were most ap-

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were dreaded by the other as the Champions for the Episcopal Cause, were Mr. Dodwell; particularly in his Book of Schism: And in the other of the One Priest and one Altar, and the Author of the Principles of the Cyprianick Age and the Vindication thereof.

The first of these Authors was so pelted wit Repreaches by those among whom I was, and they endeavoured to render his Name, fo popu larly odious, that to be suspected of his Princi ples was as criminal, in their Account, as to be convicted of Atheism, and the Book of Schism was reckoned as dangerous as that of Spinofa. But I was lucky that I had refolved not to be catched by any popular Arts, and that I took Time to consider how many I had known before, whom defigning Men had treated in the fame Manner. And I thought, particularly concerning Mr. Dodwell, that he must needs be fomething extraordinary, whom People were wat for much Pains to have thought ill, which put me upon making the more diligent Enquiry about him: And the Truth is, I was glad to find, that he was a Man of a prodigious Stock of Knowledge, of a primitive Piety, and one whom Conscience and not Interest, had engaged to plead the Episcopal Cause. "Tis true, he feemed to have given his Enemies a Handle against him, by the uncouth. Thoughts which he vented in his Book of the Soul; but this he

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did in a Manner so learned, and so far above the Comprehension of ordinary Readers, that, allowing his Opinion to have been erroneous. yer would not many be in Hazard of being perverted by it. Withall, I confider that my then Search was not to be employed about that (fupposed) fingular Opinion of his; for what I was then defirous to know, was only, whether his Arguments for Episcopacy were forcible or not; or if he had justly stated the Notion of Schifm, and duly applyed it. And indeed I must say, that it seemed to me, he had stated the Controverly fairly; that his Authorities were pertinent and juffly alledged, and that his Deductions from them, and all his other ook Reasonings, did proceed in a Mathematical be Chain: So that I thought, that did their Prethe judices suffer his greatest Enemies to read the Books I have named, the most obstinate of them all would certainly feel fome Qualms of Conviction.

And all I shall say of the other, so justly celebrated, Author, is ( and in Truth 'tis as much as can be faid of any Man ) that I thought he purfued the Argument in the same Manner with Mr. Dodwell, and improved upon it.

These Authors of both Sides, I examined with a particular Exactness; and I studied this, the rather that I was convinced the Discovery of that Society to which the Preference was due, and in whose Communion I would be

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As to the other Controversies, such as their that relate to Doctrine, Worship, &c. I con fulted the respective Authors Pro and Con.

And now that I had taken so much Pains, and read fo many Books, and confidering further. the Opposition of the two Ways, and the Evil dence of Truth; it would Argue, either the Weakness of the Advocates for Truth, a too sceptical Suspence, or too much Duliness in the Enquirer after it, not to be considerably And indeed, I must own, that by this Time the Ballance received a discernible Determination. But before I should pass a Judgment, I thought fit to proceed yet further.

I had often observed, that the Books are very valuable Helps in all rational Enquiries; yet is the Conversation of a kind and knowing Friend much more so. How many Difficulties may, and sometimes do spring in ones Head, in the reading of a Book, which either the Author did not forfee, or upon which perhaps he would not have declared himself, though he had, whereas a Friend is always ready at Hand, to fatisfy all the Doubts that may occur? Kindness engages him, and the Privacy encourages him to do it without Reserve. made me apply my felf to those who I thought were most capable, and would, with most Freedom, ( 271 )

id willow, communicate their Thoughts upon the subjects which I was then enquiring into.

Then I collected my own Observations on he Spirit and Principles of that Party of which had so long been, and took Time to inform my felf about what I did not know of the other. And as to both I did narrowly observe how the Evi Spirit and Principles of each did discover

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All this I did, not once, but many Times : nay, so often, that at length, I found my felf prepared to form a fix'd Judgment. But before I actually did this, I wrought my Soul into the utmost Seriousness and Intention of Thought it was capable of. I once more recollected what I had learned from Men, Books, or my own Experience, for or against either Principle or Party. And last of all, I invoked the Aid and Direction of the all-wife and infinitely good God. And upon the whole I found. that as my former Principles were falle, and the Society in which I had so long been, was dangerous, fo Truth and Safety were on the other Side.

But though I was thus determined in my Judgment, yet could not I so easily prevail with my felf, to declare to the World that I was fo. I loved Obscurity, and therefore had no Fondness to have my Name toss'd, or to be the Occasion of the various, and probable uncharitable Conjectures of Men, to whom I could

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could not have Access to acquaint them with the Manner and Reasons of my Conduct. Besides, I had been not a little oblig'd by the Presbyterians; so that I could not but find it uneasie to declare (especially in so provoking a Manner) that I was out of all case of doing them that Service which they promised themselves from me.

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To which add, that I had often heard them talk of Men with too much Virulency, and perfecute them with too much Violence, who had not otherwise provoked them, but that they were Episcopal, or at most Ministers of that Perswasion. How good Ground then had I to apprehend that the fiery Furnace should be made seven Times hotter for me who had deserted them to become such? And in this they

have not disappointed my Fears.

All this might (as for some time it really did) very much discourage me from discovering my inward Perswasion. But my Conviction was so forcible, and the Remonstrances of my Conscience were so severe, that I was at length oblig'd publickly to renounce the Presbyterian Principles and Party, and to embrace the Communion of the Catholick Church. And the Reasons which determined me to do so, I shall acquaint the Reader with, after I have laid down some Principles, subsumed some Corrollaries from them, and have fairly stated the Debate. All which I conceive to be very

seful for my more distinct proceeding. The Principles are.

I That the Church is but one.

II. That it is a Society distinct from, and independent upon the State.

From the first of the Principles I inferr'd

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these Corrollaries.

I. That the ordinary Means of Salvation,

are confined to the Church.

II. That whoever are without ( but more especially they who separate from ) its Communion, are out of the ordinary Way of Salvation.

And from the second of these Principles I in-

ferred these Corrollaries.

I. That the Church has diffine Laws. and a Government and Governours of its own. which can serve all the Purposes of the So-

Clety.

II. That that which does properly nominate one a Member of the Church, is the Acknowledgment of its Laws and Government, and a Submission to the Authority of its Governours: Nor is the owning any one of

those enough without the other.

III. That the Contempt, either of its Laws or lawful Governours, justly deprives one of the Priviledges of this, as well as any other Society. These are Truths so evident, that I think it needless to enlarge upon them; only to prevent Mistake, know, that when I say in this last last Corrollary, that the Contempt of the law. ful Governours of the Church, justly deprives one of its Priviledges, I do not mean, that a Man may not in fome Cases, refuse Submisfion to the lawful Governours of a Church; for if they require Terms of Communion that are truly finful, he not only may, but ought to separate from, and disown them. But my Meaning only is that whoever reckons a Society wrong in its fundamental Constitution, and opposes the Governours thereof as fo many Ufurpers; fuch declare themselves no Members of that Society, and that they have no Title to its Priviledges. In which Cale, if the Go-vernment be duly constitute, and the Governours themselves lawful, then wift the separating from, or disowning of either infer all that I have faid in the last Corrollary.

All this I know will not be disputed by the Presbyterians, but I am affraid we shall differ widely in our Application. For the Use which the Force of Truth obliges me to make of the Principles which I have established, and of

the Corrollaries deduced from them, is,

That, if in Order to have a Title to the Means of Salvation, we must be in Communion with the Church to which they are confined, according to the first Corrollary from the first Principle. And if in Order to be Members of the Church, People must submit to its lawful Governours, according to the second Corrol-

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31 ) ary from the fecond Principle. Then that Society, which is not only defective with Repect to that Form of Government that obained in the Days of Christ, and his Apostles, and downwards ( which is undoubtedly the rightful one ) but does likewife disown and oppose those who govern after that Manner, is without the Church, by the third Corrollary, and confequently out of the ordinary Road to Heaven, according to the second Corrollary, from the first Principle. This Consequence, however harsh it may be thought, does undenyably affect the Presbyterians; if it be true that the Form of Government, which they not only want, but do at this time to violently oppole. is the same with that which obtained in the earliest Ages of the Church: And that it is fo, I shall endeavour to prove, after I have told you what I conceive to be the ancient Form of Government, and how it agrees with that which the Presbyterians do now fo much oppole.

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The ancient Form of Church Government, was that by which the Body of the Faithful was subjected to those whom Christ, his Apostles and their Successors had ordained to rule over them: And these again were divided into their distinct Orders; each subordinate to, and acting in different Capacities, the one from the other. I think it needless to determine more explicitly, what are the distingui-

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thing Characteristicks of the feveral Officers, of to fix the Bounds of their respective Powers, it being sufficient to answer my Design in this short Apology, if I can prove that the Government of the Church, from the Beginning was managed by Officers of different Orders, and fuch as acted in Capacities, superior the one to the other; among whom there were neither ruling Elders, nor Deacons, fuch as the Presbyterians have. This is upon the main all that the Episcopal Writers plead for; and this is what the Presbyterians oppose as Antichristian; how justly, let the Reader judge, after he has confidered the Arguments which perswaded me that there should be a Subordination of Officers in the Church. Such as in the first Place, seeing it must be confessed, that there is no Inconsistency 'twixt the Ends of Government, and an Imparity of Officers; nay more, that a Government of a subordinate Constitution, is at least as conducive to the Preservation of Society as any else; it follows that the Government of the Church may be of this Kind. Which Consideration one would think sufficient to discredit that peremptory Sentence pronounced against Episcopal Government, as absolutely unlawful. But I add further, That if a Government of a subordinate Form; I mean, where the several Orders of Officers are subjected the one to the other, and all of them to one Supreme, can answer the

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To this purpole it were calle for me to adduce the many Arguments, by which several earned Authors have endeavoured to prove the reference of this Kind of Government, to hat by which all in Authority are put upon a Level; but tis sufficient for my present Purpole to alledge, that all the Subjects of the British Monarchy must own their being per-waded of this. If then they themselves must cknowledge this to be the best Form of Government for the State, I fee no Reason from heNature of the thing, why it should not be reckoned such for the Church also.

For though I believe as well as they, that he Church is distinct from, and independent ipon the State; yet this far I find them agree, that both are Societies, and, as fuch, ought to have that Form of Government which is coneffedly best. Now to me it seems odd, that the same Society in one Capacity, shall be govern'd in the Way of Subordination, and that this shall be granted to conduce most for ts Happiness; whereas under another Reduplication, it must be govern'd by Officers acting in a perfect Parity; and that it shall be declared absolutely unlawful to govern it after any other Manner. This looks not like God, whose Administrations must be supposed to È

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proceed in the most simple, orderly, and uniform Manner. Moreover, fuch is the Necessity of a Subordination, that the Presbyterians find themselves obliged to admit one kind of it in the Government of the Church. Now I would know of them, why they are for a Subordina. tion of Judicatories, while they are at the fame time against an Imparity of Rulers? This, in my Opinion, is the nearest to an Inconsistency that can be; and they know the Independent (who, agreeably to their Principle of Parity, are against all fort of Subordination ) do charge it upon them as such. But passing this, to what purpose (I would ask them) serves a Subordination of Judicatories, where the Judges are supposed to be still the same? For if it be partly, in Order to rectify the Mistakes of these that are inserior, that they admit of higher Courts; I cannot understand how these who did amiss in the one, shall correct it in the other: Or how their fellow Members (to whom they are supposed in all Respects equal) shall judge better than they. Nay, this Subordination, instead of mending, may happen to make Matters worse. For they who might chance to act their part well enough in a Kirk-Session or Presbytry, will probably behave but very awkwardly in a higher Capacity; and by Reason of the Disproportion of their Abilities to the Importance of the Affairs that are brought

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So that while according to the Principles of he Presbyterians, the meanest Elder in a Kirksession, or weakest Brother in a Presbytry, may be, and often actually are Members of heir highest Court: I cannot imagine, how he Ends of Government shall be answered, or how their Society can long stand. But if We fee thefe Ends tollerably served, and that their Government proves pretty lasting, then may we conclude, that this is owing to fomething else than their Constitution; and that something is, that though by their Principles all Church Officers are allowed an equal Authority, yet in Effect the whole, or at least the chief Power is in the Hands of a few, who are the most Knowing and Wife. This I who have been often present at each of their Courts, have had frequent Occasion to observe concerning them all, and especially of the General Assembly; where I found that some Preachers and ruling Elders, whom I could name (though not so many in Number as were the Bishops of Scotland ) had in Effect as full a Negative over their Brethren, as was ever pretended to by them. To this Purpose I could alledge several remarkable Instances. Nay, there was scarce any Affair of Moment, which did not discover this; and least they should think that I talk at Random, I shall at this Time mention onc.

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one, by which the Reader may form a probable Conjecture of the rest; and 'tis this, Not. withstanding the zealous Endeavours of, by far, the most numerous Party in the Assembly, to have the intrinsick Power of the Church assersed by an Act, yet have they hitherto proven unsuccessful. I was a Spectator at three several General Assemblies, and at each of them I found, that the principal Instruction, which almost all the Presbytries in the Nation, had given their Representatives, was to urge this Point: And, to do them Justice, they deserved the Trust; but such was the Authority of the leading Junto ( who were upon the Matter fo many Bishops) and as such, never missed to be chosen to serve as Members in the Assembly, ( how agreeable to the Presbyterian Principles, let the Reader judge; ) such, I say, was their Authority, that they then did, and have hitherto (for ought I can learn ) got that dangerous Affair crushed.

If then from what I have said above, upon this Head, it appears, that the Government of the Church may be lawfully constituted by an Imparity of Officers; yea more, if the Ends of Government necessarily require its being modelled, after that Manner: And surther, if from the Instance which I have given, and from many more, which I am ready to adduce to the same Purpose, it is undenyable, that the Power, even of Jurisdiction, as it ought not,

( 37 ) oneither is it lodged equally with all, to whom he Presbyterians pretend it does belong; but ar, s really in the Hands of a few, the most Knowng and Wife among them, who can use it to er heir Society; Why then do they oppose that Kind of Government, which is not only indifbensibly necessary in it self, but does ( in Depite of their Principles ) actually obtain anong themselves?

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Ought they not rather, whom the Ends of Government entitle to the chief Power, and who exercise the same in Fact, frankly affert that it belongs to them, of right? And if fo. why should they refuse to be regulary admitted to the Exercise thereof, by those who are authorized to that effect. And should not they whom the Preservation of the Society necessarly deprive of an equal Share in this Power, ingenuously own that they have no Title to it. And both should do this, the rather, that I do not think'tis possible for them to reconcile their professed Principles with their present Administration; or, to speak more plainly, I see not how they can otherwise save their Reputation, the one of their Honesty, or the other of their Understandings.

But I forsee, it will be objected, that what I have advanced, will conclude alike, against all who pretend to the supreme Power, Bishops as well as the Members of the General Affem-

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bly, if they be not the most (at least equally Knowing and Wife. In answer to which, I mul confess, that though the Ends of Government and the Welfare of Society do require, that the most eminent for Prudence and Knowledge should be entrusted with the chief Power, ye has it too frequently happened, that Men of inferior Abilities have attained to the highest Ecclefiastical Dignities. But when such is the Form of Church Government ( for I meddle not with the State, nor does what I have faid in the least affect the same; the best Form of Government, with respect to which, being in my Opinion, that which is managed in the way of Succession, which makes it a quite different Case from that which I am upon I say, when such is the Government of the Church, that there are different Spheres, in which Men are to act, 'tis presum'd they are chosen with Qualifications proportioned to each; fo that if unworthy Rulers are admitted into the highest Posts, 'tis not the Fault of the Constitution, Whereas, acbut of those who prefer them. cording to the Presbyterian Platform, the less Knowing and Wife are allowed an equal Authority with those who deserve it best: An Establishment, which seems to bid Defiance to common Sense, and which is so opposite to the Ends of Government, that the Ruine of their Society would foon make its most zealous Abetters betters sensible of it, did they not in effect re? nounce their Principles to confult their Safety.

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Thus you fee, as far as one can form a udgment from the Nature of the thing ( which in my poor Opinion is a very fure Standard what I have faid, may in some measure serve to determine the Controversy about Church-Government. But I know this will be fo far from satisfying the Presbyterians, that they'll be ready to charge me with Blasphenay, who dare offer any plaufible Arguments in Behalf of a Government against which, they believe, God has declared himself so expresly in his Word; at least they'll say, that all my Reasonings must fall to the Ground, if it be (as they are fully perswaded it is) true in Fact, that Presbyterian Government is of divine Institution, and that an Imparity of Rulers is Antiscriptural. And indeed I must acknowledge, that if the holy Scriptures be of their Side, they carry the Cause fairly. But confident Allegations, hower they may impose upon over modest and less thinking Judges, are so far from amounting to a folid Proof in the reckoning of thosewho examineMatters more severely, that it renders a Cause suspected to them. To apply this to the Case in hand; to hear the Presbyterians talk, a modest Person would be tempted to think, that their Form of Government were fo legible in the Bible, that a Body need only open their Eyes to find it there; whereas they who ful-

fulpend their Judgments and take Time to en Chuquire into their Pretensions, find, that all they Refr can alledge are only fome small Shreds of s d Scripture, which others may as early, and ame Purpose. While, on the other Hand, not on seen ly does the Nature of the thing challenge the Preference to a Government, constitute by Subordination of Rulers ( a strong Presumption that it' is not Antiscriptural ) but tis likewise actually approven of by God; and this he has to fully notifyed in his Word, that to prove it, I am not put to the wretched Shift of obtruding upon my Readers any remote Confequences fetched from two or three controverted Texts, as the Adversaries in this Case are obliged to do.

For Proof then of this Point from Scripture, Talledge (and 'tis what cannot be denied by the Presbyterians ) that the Form of Government which obtained in the Jewish Church, and that by divine Institution, was constituted by Officers acting in an Imparity; fuch as the High Priest, Priests and Levites; each of which were Orders distinct from, and subordinate to the other. It therefore follows, that such an Imparity is not only lawful, but also best, at least for that State of the Church: And if it be undenyably best under that Dispensation, I cannot conceive how it can be reckoned unlawful in the Christian Church. Tis true, the

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( 41 ) Church, in these two States, differs in many Respects; but when these Respects are such s do not hinder its being upon the Main the ame facred Society, I know no Reason why ary I should not still have the like Form of Governon ment: Nay, 'tis an Impeachment of the dirine Wisdom to think that God would alter hat Form of Government which he had instiuted to ostablish another quite different from it.

Well, this one would think sufficient to prove the Perpetuity of that Form of Government, but the Gentlemen of the other Side are not of this Mind: Let us hear then what they

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And in the first place, they say, That the Aaronick Priesthood was Typical, and, as such, was abolish'd upon the Incarnation. In Anfwer to which, I grant that these Parts of the priestly Office, which did prefigure the Sacrifice and Intercession of Jesus Christ were to cease upon the Crucifixion and Ascension of our Lord. But they ought to confider that the high Priest was also a Governour in the Fewish Church. This is what none can reasonably ('tis what the Presbyterians, who are so zealous Asferters of the intrinsick Power, will not) deny of any Church Officer; and what follows will likewise be granted by them, who are such declared Enemies to the fole Power, viz. That the ordinary Priests had a Share in the Government with the high Priest: And seeing they Were

were confessedly subordinate in other Respects nere why not in this too? Nor will they deny the the Levites were subservient to both. The Question then is, Did the high Priest or inferio Priests typify any thing under the Reduplic tion of Rulers, or the Levites, as under them Or was there any thing typical in their Sub ordination as such? The Presbyterians, I am confident, will not answer in the affirmative But allow they should say, that not only the Levitical Priesthood, but likewise its Subord nation was typical; yet must they, at the same Time, grant that though the Type was a bolished, this happened, that it might give Place to the more perfect Antitype: Nor wil they, I hope, deny, that the Antitype mul still preserve what is effential to the Type; fo that though it be abrogated, fomething correspondent thereto must always continue. If then the Constitution of the Levitical Priesthood, was subordinate, the Christian must be so too: otherwise the Type is not adequatly represented by the Antitype. From all which it follows, feeing this Form of Government is of divine Institution; and seeing there is nothing in the Nature of it, from which its Mutability can be inferr'd, that it, or (which is the same to my Purpose ) one correspondent thereto, ought to continue still in the Church.

If they shall further urge, that this Argument, if it conclude at all, proves that as there was one supreme Governour in the Jewish Church,

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This Cavil, I confess, is very plausible, and ur Adversaries do triumph upon it as unis werable; but they do not perhaps know. hom they oblige by this: Let me tell them hen, that the Roman Catholicks are no less and of it than they. But I answer, that seeng there was one of the highest Order in the ewish Church, it follows unanswerably (taking long with you what I have faid above upon his Head) that there ought to be one at least n the Christian Church. This is enough to prove the Point against the Presbyterians, and I lefy them if they shall answer directly to evade t. Let them choose then, either to yield the Cause to the Papists, or else say with me, in Answer to this Argument of theirs for the Popes Supremacy, that in fo confin'd a Society, as was the Jewish Church, any more than one Officer of the highest Order, was needless; feeing the People could easily repair to him, from the remotest Corners of Judea, upon all the proper Occasions; and one was sufficient for the Discharge of all the Duties of that Office. But though one was enough, does this hinder that there might not have been feverals; or rather does it not follow, that because there was one, there would have been more, had they been needful? But fince the Partition-

Wall is broken down, the Church is become a Society of lo large an Extent, that all the faithful cannot have Accels to one, nor can one ferve all the Purpoles of that Office. Much more might be faid to invalidate this Argument, as it is managed by the Popils Writers; but I am not so immediately engaged against them at this Time, as against the Presbyterians; And therefore referring the Reader for full Sa tisfaction to the Authors who have managed this Controversy against the Papists. I'll infift a little against the Presbyterians, and I ask them, Whether it be just to condemn the Order as useless among Christians, because one is not able to perform all the Offices belonging to it? Or, Whether it be not rather reasonable to acknowledge, that, as there was in the Fewifi Church, one Ecclefiastical Rule of the highest Order, and, no more, because one was fulficient; so should Christians have, one at least, and as many more as are needful? Let them but allow one, for every District, in Proportion to that, to which the high Priest's Authority did extend, and the Debate is at an End : For if they once get this, 'tis not to be supposed, that they (whose most popular Argument against Episcopacy, is, that the Dioceles are too large') will find fault, though the Bishop's Power be restrained to a narrower Compass, than was that of the Jewish high Priest.

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Thus you fee, that the Form of Government, which obtained in the Jewish Church, as constituted by Officers acting in Subordiation, and that there is nothing in that Contitution which renders it peculiar to that Diffensation; doubtless then, this ought to be he standing Form of Government in the Church: And in order to prove that it was so

n the Days of Christ and his Apostles; and consequently that it should be so, from that Time forward, I think sit to proceed in this

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Supposing that neither the Nature of the thing, nor the Constitution of the Jewish Church could determine the Preference of either Form, but that it was to depend intirely upon the Institution of Jesus Christ, after what manner his Church was to be govern'd; 'tis more than probable, that he who knew what Form of Government would be most acceptable to the World, and whose Condescensions. in other Respects were so wonderful, would oblige Mankind with the Institution of that Form which they would like best, and would recommend himself and his holy Religion most effectually to them. Now, who knows not, that a Government, constituted by a Subordination of Officers, would in the Days of Christ prove more agreeable to Mankind than the contrary; when such was the Form, which then generally obtain'd, at least among the 7ews

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Jews and Romans? This alone might be granted fufficient to determine the Preference in a Mat

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ter supposed to be indifferent.

But I add further, that scarce could any thing be conceived more unfuitable to the Notions which we ought to entertain of the Wisdom and Goodness of our Lord, and the Inspiration of his Apostles, than to establish levelling Kind of Government in the Church: feeing nothing would more effectually alienate the Affections of the Jews from, or raise the Jealousy of the Romans against Christianity. As to the Jews, Did not Jesus Christ and his A. postles very well know, how fond they were of their least Ceremonies and how displeasing any Alteration about them would prove to that stiff necked Generation? And is it to be supposed that they would be less zealous for their so much admired Hierarchy, or that the Establishment of a Government, so widely different from it, would not be equally disobliging to them? Upon which I ask the Adversaries in this Case, Is it likely that they who became. all things to all Men; who made fuch large Allowances, with Respect to Ceremonies that were necessary to be abolished, as inconsistent with Christianity, and adopted fundry of their Observances into that holy Religion, in Order to gain that People, would provoke their Aversion ( who were but too much prejudiced already ) by determining against their Inclinations,

cely gratifyed them, and that confessedly, with as much Advantage to Christianity as by he Determination of the Contrary. And if we may reasonably presume, that Christ and his Apostles would not, in an Affair of this Nature, do that which would be displeasing to the Jews, it plainly follows, that the Government of the Church, as settled by Christ and his Apostles, was managed by Officers, acting in a Subordination, and not in an Equality.

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This Presumption becomes still the stronger, and the Consequences from it so much the more evident, when 'tis confidered, that the doing otherwise would heighten the Jealousy, and provoke the Indignation of the Romans against the Church: For what could do this more, than to fee a Government erected in the very Heart of the Empire, not only different from that which obtained among them, but likewise nearly refembling that which they had so lately shaken off? Is it any Wonder, if in this Case the Church should be suspected by the Romans for a Club of Republicans, who would probably attempt something dangerous to the Government, which might terminate in its total Subversion? Or would they be justly blam'd, if, for their own Security, they should endeavour to crush a Society of so dangerous a Constitution? Now I leave it to the Consideration of all wife and impartial Readers, whether it he not a Thought too unworthy to be enter tained of Christ and his Apostles, that the should have given Occasion to so reasonable Jealoufy, and exposed Christians to Persecution upon an Account about which they migh have innocently agreed with their Enemies But, besides this ( which in the mean time is a firong Presumption ) we do not find that ever their Persecuters did charge it upon them

as a Crime, that the Church was of a Republi can Constitution, which they would not fail to have done, had it been true; feeing of all

others this had been the most plausible Pretext for their Persecutions.

I know no Exception to which this Argument is liable, fave that it feems to prove that the Government of the Church ought to be Monarchical, as well as that of the Roman Empire; and if so, that this would raise Jealoufies, and occasion Persecution as well as the other. But I Answer, That it makes the Constitution of the Christian Church sufficiently resemble the Jewish, and distinguisheth it from the Roman Commonwealth ( which is the great Design of my Argument ) if it be govern'd by Officers, acting subordinately, though under feveral co-ordinate Supreams; and this is what I have been all along endeavouring to prove. But supposing that the Government of the Church were Monarchical ( which by the Bye I think it really is ) yet would not this furnish

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is Browles with any reasonable Grounds of balousy or Persecution: Rer besides that, its sonarch had disclaimed all medling with secure Assirs, he is likewise its wishes, and I can be find what the Romans needed to apprehend such an one.

These Arguments did in a great Measure is.

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These Arguments did in a great Measure is. siy me, that the Church ought to be gover-ed by Rulers acting in an orderly Subordina-ton; but I do not to well know, if the Brevity, which I have been obliged to endeavour (for eating which may be eatily gueffed ) has alowed me to express my lest with that Emphalis nd Peripicuity necessary for the Conviction fothers; yet have I to given the Hint, that hope all differning and un prejudiced Res. ders may take it, and be convinced; as well as ram ! Though at the lame time, I know for much of the Spirit of the Presbycerians, that they will not be much moved by any thing D have faid and that I must reckon it an Act of Grace, if they shall allow the preceeding Argua ments to be for much as prefumptive. Well, in Condescention to their Weakness, I shall for once suppose them to be no more; but they are fuck Prefumptions as they must confess, do amount to lo many Demonstrations; if it be true in Fact, that the Form of Government which I endeavour to prove by them, did obtam in the Days of Christ and his Apostles.

And

( 50 ) And to put it beyond all Doubt that it did fo, I alledge the concurring Testimony of the Evangelists in their Gospels, and of the A. postles in their Acts and Epistles; an Authority which they cannot, which indeed they do not refuse, but on the contrary pretend a great Ve neration for; and to which they very confident. ly appeal for a Decision in this Debate, which makes me hope that they'll be the less offended when I calmly ask them, After what Manner was the Church govern'd in the Days of Christ I know they'll readily answer, That our blessed Lord himself was its sole King and Head; this is what they do, on all Occasions ( with a very laudable Zeal) affert him to be. If then Jesus Christ be the alone Head and Monarch of the Church, then its Government must be Monarchical: This Consequence is undeniable; for

The Question then is, Was there ever a Government of a Monarchical Constitution, where the Monarch did not, yea behoved not to derive of his Authority in an orderly Gradation upon feveral subordinate Ministers? And shall we suppose that he who is King in Zion shall do otherwise in his Church, than all wife Princes have ever done in their Kingdoms? Or is it to be thought that one and the same Society shall be govern'd in two different Manners? That is, Shall the Government

whence is a Monarchy so denominated, but because one is invested with the Sovereignty.

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ment of the Church be Monarchical and Republic both at once; which certainly it must be. f the Presbyterian Principles be true? The one y their afferting, that Jesus Christ is King of he Church; the other, by their maintaining hat it ought to be govern'd by Rulers, acting n a perfect Parity. But this would make a Constitution so monstrous, and is in it self so contradictious, that they should upon second Thoughts either deny that the Government of the Church is Monarchical, or, which is the fame, that our bleffed Lord is not its fole King and Head: Or else, grant that he establish'd in his Kingdom that Subordination which a Monarchy ( especially if it be absolute, as it is undenyably in this Case) necessarily requires, and not that Republican Parity, which is inconfistent with it.

This alone is sufficient to infer the Imparity, which I contend for among the Ministers of Christ; but to put the Matter beyond Debate, it is evident from the History of the Gospels, that such an Imparity actually obtained in the Days of Christ: For as he himself was sole Supreme, so were the twelve Apostles subordinate to him, and the Disciples were inferior to them in the Government of the Church. And that these latter were so, is plain from this (to mention no other Proofs at that time) that Matthias (whom the Ancients generally, and their supposed Friend St. Jerome in particular G 2

allow to have been one of the feverty Dif ciples ) must be chosen, Alls 1, 25, before he could take part of that Ministry and Apostleshin from which Judy by Transgressions fell; which Election would have been superfluous, and the Words [ To take part of that Ministry and Apostle thin I had been Nonfence, were he equal in Office with the Apostles before. But whe need I infift in proving a Point which is fo plain, that the Presbyterians themselves do no deny it; but on the contrary are forced to confels, that the Government of the Church, while Christ was upon Earth, was constituted by Officers, acting in Subordination. Which Acknowledgment one would think sufficient to de termine the Controverly against them.

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For if Jesus Christ has made any Intimations at all, with Respect to the Manner, in which the Church was to be govern'd ( and by the Bye, 'tis reasonable to suppose, that he who was the Head of the Society should do it rather than any other ) either we must take this Incimation from the History of the Gospels in Favour of a subordinate Form, and then the Controversy is at an End; or else they must atledge some plain and express Texts one or more from these Gospels, by which they can prove the Institution of their Schome, Plain, I fay, and Express; for such they must be, that are probative in an Affair of this Nature; and are proposition and a day of the by

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The Debate then turns upon this, Whether here be any Texts in the four Goldels, proving he Institution of Parity? The Presbyzerians werr the Affirmative with a great Deal of Albrance; but they must excuse me to declare, that after having often read the Golpels with very great Inclinations to be latisfied about this Point, I have not found in any of them, the politive Inflitution of either Form of Government; and but one Text, that did to much as feem to favour an Equality among Church Officers, which (be it known to you) others have made Use of, with much more Reason to prove a Preeminence. The Text I mean, is in St. Matth. 20. 25. &c. and it runs thus, Jesus called them (the Apostles) unto him, and said, se know that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise Dominion over them, and they that are great exercife Authority upon them , but it shall not be for among you; but who foever will be great among you, let them be your Minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your Servant. Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministred unto but to minister. From this Place and its Parailels in St. Mark 10. and St. Luke 22. they must either prove the Juredivineship of their Parity, or elfe grant that it was not at all instituted by our Lord; there being no other Texts which they do, that I can remember, fo

much as alledge to this Purpose; and with how good Reason they adduce this, let the Reade judge, after he has feriously considered this Passage, as I have transcribed it; or rather as it is narrated by the three Evangelists, and I am much mistaken, if any who is not wretched ly prejudicated, shall discover in it the least In finuation in favour of Presbyterian Government. This I may be allowed to affert with so much the more Confidence, when I find the learnedst Authors of that Perfwasion, candidly own, that the Equality which they contend for among Church Officers cannot be inferred from this Place. This is acknowledged, particularly by Mr. Pool, whom I the rather mention, because he is of so great Authority with them, at this Time, and because his Books, especially the Annotations, which pass under his Name, are in so many of their Hands: I wish they may confult him on this Passage, and they'll be convinc'd that I have done him no Injustice.

This I should have thought enough faid to satisfy those who are most Judicious among themselves, that there is no plain and express Institution of their Parity in this Text, which ye know sufficiently Answers my Design. But sinding it still insisted on by their lesser Authors, and having been so often attack'd with it my self in Conversation, (that I may remove, as much as is possible for me, any Scruple that

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( 55 nay remain with those who are catch'd with he Sound of these Words ) I shall give the leader and my felf the Trouble to infift a little proving that nothing can be deduced from hem: no, not by the remotest Consequences or an quality or against a Subordination of Officers in the Church; and this will appear, f we confider, that these Words were uttered y our Lord, after the Request which the Mother of James and John made in their Behalf, that they might fit, the one upon Christ's right Hand, the other upon his left, in his Kingdom. This gives him Occasion to correct a Mistake, under which the Apostles probably laboured in common with their fellow Tews, anent the Kingdom of the Messas, which they vainly expected should be Temporal; And he also warns them against that Pride and Tyrrany, to which Persons of eminent Authority are so obnoxious. He tells them, that the Government of his Kingdom was of another Nature, than that of the Princes of the Gentiles, they exercised Coercion, and too often a tyrranical Domination over their Inferiors:

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This he discharges his Apostles and their Successors to do; the Subjects to whose Authority, were Persons considered in a spiritual Capacity; whom he desires them to treat with as much Condescension and Humility, as if they were their Servants, after his own Example, who, though he was Lord of all, did for

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the Good of Mankind, humble himself below what was possible for any of them to do Now what is in all this for aParity, or against a Pa eminence among Ecclesiasticks Does ou Lord forbid a Subordination of Officers in the Church, when he condemns Tyrrany in the State, or because he recommends Humility Does he put all upon a level a I know they's fay to this, That the Prohibition ( you shall not exercise such an Authority as did the King of the Gentiles ) does not lo much mean, you shall not Tyranize as they did, but that the meaning only is, you shall not have the like Kind of Government with that, which obtained among them, which brings the Controverse upon this Text to this Isue, Whether by the Authority, which the Apostles are forbidden to exercise, after the Manner of the Princes of the Gentiles, be meant a tyrranical Domination, as we fay, or all Kind of Preeminence among Church-men, as they presend, and to prove that the former is the true Sense of these Words I fay that xaraxuoseva ( which our Translators have rendered, to exercise Authority ) does properly fignify fuch an Exercise of it, as is Tyrranical. Beza himfelf fays upon the Place, that it is Dominari cum quadam acerbitate. The Septuaging who is word to naranverse ( which are Words of the fame Import in this Place ) in this very Senic. And St. Luke, whose Authofigy is more unquestionable with thom, means the

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he same, by karanuene Acts 19. 16. which the only other Place where it occurs in all eNew Testament. And that it is to be underood there in the Sense which I contend for, ill be put beyond all Doubt, when we conder the Occasion upon which it is used, which ras this; The Sons of one Sceva, a Jewish Priest. ttempted to disposses a Demoniack in the Tame of Christ; upon which, fays the Evanelift, the Man, in whom the evil Spirit was, eapt on them, and overcame them, as our Franslation hath it, was navanusseugas auren saith he Greek : In which Case, if it does not import Violence and Tyrrany, it fignifies nothing at il, and if fuch be the Meaning of the Word n this Place, they must grant that it ought to be understood after the same Manner in St. Matthew, &c. otherwise they'll condemn what their Confession of Faith calls the infallible Rule of interpreting Scripture by it felf.

Nor does this Criticism only serve to prove my Sense of the Text; but its also supported by another Conjecture, with which this Passage does furnish me, as it is related by St. Luke 22, and 25. who there adds, to what the other Evangelists had said, that these Kings of the Gentiles, who exercised the Authority, which the Aposties are discharged to imitate, are called Benefactors, despressed, as it is in the Greek, which gives me this Hint, that if these Gentile Princes, whom their mean Flatterers

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firnamed Euergetes, or Benefactors, were for of them guilty of Violence; then doubtle the Authority, which was exercised by those who were so call'd, is meant to be Tyrranial and, in that Respect, 'tis that our Saviour for bids his Apostles to copy after them. Now, that some of these who had this Sirname given them, did abuse their Authority to the work of Purpoles, is so notour, that none who have any tollerable Knowledge in History, can be ignorant of it. This holds true, particularly concerning Ptolomey VII. King of Egypt, sirnamed Euergetes II. who was a Prince of so debauch'd and wicked a Life, that he married his own Sifter, whom he afterwards divorced; he Murther'd Memphiscus; the Son whom he had by her, and caus'd ferve him to his Mother's Table, with several such like Acts of Lewdness and Cruelty, too long for me to relate.

This Remark, join'd with what I have said upon the Word rater of the who use to be satisfied with this Kind of Proof, that my Gloss is the true one. But, to tell the Truth, I do not much admire this Way of determining Controversies, by Criticisms upon Words; nor would I have us'd it against any but the Presbyterians, who, I am hopeful will be the better pleas'd with what I have said in this Manner, that they themselves lay so much

tress upon the like, in all their Debates, and specially in this, now under Consideration.

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But for their Satisfaction, who expect somehing more folid, I fay, that the true Sense of hefe Words will best appear by considering the Opposition, which our Lord states 'twixt his own Example (which he proposes for their Imiation ) and that of the Princes of the Gentiles, which he forbids the Apostles to follow. They were not, fays the Text, to exercise Authority, as did the Princes of the Gentiles, but after the Manner of the Son of Man. Whatever then was the Authority, which these Princes exercised, Jesus Christ did, and the Apostles, after his Example, were to exercise the contrary: But it cannot be faid, without Blafphemy, that he put himself upon a Level with his Apostles, with Respect to Authority and Jurisdiction; and consequently that Authority which they were to exercise, in Imitation of him, does not import a perfect Equality among them in Opposition to that Imparity which obtain'd in the Heathen Governments: But the Prohibition must only mean, that as their Government was, for the most part, a proud and severe Domination, so that of the Rulers of the Christian Church, should be case and condescending: To which add, that our Lord cannot be supposed to forbid in this Text, fuch a Subordination of Rulers in the Church, as was that, which at that time ob-H 2 tain'd

60 tain'd in most of the Gentile States; seeing this were to condemn that Form, by which he thought fit the Church should be govern'd in the Days of his Flesh, which was precisely of the fame Kind, that is to fay, Monarchical: Be fides, if he had designed to discharge all Imparity among the Officers in his Church, a the Presbyrerians believe, and not Tyrrany, as we think itis Probable he would not have stated the Opposition 'twixt them and the Prin ces of the Gentiles; but rather twixt them and the High Prieft, Priefts and Levites among the Jews; which by the Bye is a further Confirmation of my Argument, for the Perpetuity of a subordinate Form of Government, from the Constitution of the Tewish Church.

From all which, it evidently appears, that there is no Infinuation made in this Text, in Favour of Presbyterian Government; much less can its Inflitution be inferr'd from it. This I have taken to much the more Pains to prove. that I might leave no Rubb in the Way of my Argument for an Imparity of Church Officers, from the Constitution of the Church in the Days of Christ; which Argument therefore I am now at Freedom thus briefly to purfue.

Seeing our bleffed Lord has not instituted that Equality among his first Ministers, which the Presbyterians contend for; either he has not fignified his Will at all, with Respect to the Manner, in which he would have his Church

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overn'd (which is not to be supposed of him the was its Founder:) Or else that Subordiation, which obtained among the Apostles and Disciples declares what Form of Government be liked best, and consequently is a Pre-

redent equivalent to an Institution.

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If thus then the Government of the Church. n the Days of Christ was constituted in the Way of Subordination, the Presbyterians must ither renounce their Pretentions to the divine Inflication of their Parity; or elfe they'll find themselves obliged to shew that the Imparity which our Lord at first established, was again abrogated by the same Authority; seeing all divine Commands are still binding, until they be cancelled by divine Countermands, which I am perfwaded is more than they will be able to prove to have happen'd in this Cafe. For befide, that our Lord has not made the least Intimation about it, in any of the Gospels; it would likewife reflect adjoully upon his Wifdom to have fettled a Government, which must be almost as soon altered as instituted. Doubtless then, whatever kind of Government obtained in the Church, in the Days of Christ ( which undeniably was that of Imparity ) was defigned to be perpetual: For if our Lord himself has not rescinded his own Institution, much less would the Apostles do it . Nor do we find that ever they attempted it, but on the contrary (as far as we can understand from their

( 62' )

their Acts and Epiftles) that Imparity while at first obtain'd among the first Ministers of the Lord, continued while they were upon Earth.

Nay, this is so very evident from their All and Epiftles, that the Presbyteriums themselve do not deny it. Yet, for all this, will the not ( tho' it might be reasonably expected the should) yield the Cause. No, the cleared Demonstration does encounter an invincible Obstinacy, when levell'd against any Opinion of theirs, which makes me entreat the Reade e're he proceed further to confider what Man ner of Spirit these are of, whom that Autho. rity, to which they so confidently appeal, and in whose Decision they promise to acquiesce, cannot determine in this Matter, when it fo plainly declares against them; and whether it be not impossible after this for the Wit of Man to invent any Arguments by which these People can be brought to a Conviction of the A challed was to be the

Their perpetual Cry, ye know, is the Scriptures. Well, the Cause is brought to this Bar; and what is the issue? The old Testament acquaints us, that the Constitution of the Jewish Church, was the Reverse of theirs. The Evangelists are likewise against them; it being undeniable from the History of the sour Gospels, that the Imparity which they so much condemn, did obtain among the first Ministers

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( 63 our Lord. The Acts and Epifiles favour em as little; nay, these are so far from intiating that the first Establishment was altered w the Apostles, that on the contrary they lainly shew its Continuance. Don't they all long make Mention of feveral Orders of Menwho were undisputedly Church Officers, that who were folemnly separated for Ecclesiastial Offices by the Imposition of Hands? And lon't they affign to each their different. Powers? What does more frequently, occur thro' these facred Writings, than the Mention that is made of Presbyters and Deacons, the one fubordinate to the other, and of the Apostles paramount to them all? Could one wish a clearer Proof than this, to evince that there was then an Imparity among Church Officers, that it was of divine Institution, and consequently that it ought to be still continued?

This is a Proof of so much Evidence, that no knowing and indifferent Person can resist it; and by which the *Presbyterian* Authors must find themselves straitned how to secure their Devotos against its Force, and at a Loss what to say to keep them in Countenance with that

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But something they will say, let us observe then how they endeavour to evade the Force of this Argument for an Imparity among Church Officers from the Constitution of the Church in the Apostolick Age.

And

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And in Answer to it, they are forced to a knowledge that the Subordination which plead for did then obtain. But withal the alledge, that this Scheme was design'd to serve only for that time. The Apostolick Office being, according to them, extraordinary, and

as fuch to expire with the Twelve.

To which I reply, That the Apostles were indeed bless'd with sundry extraordinary Gifts, which proves them to have been extraordinary Persons; and it was highly necessary they should be such. But it does not at all follow from this, that the Apostolate was an extraordinary Office, or that the Apostolick Government was Temporary: For if so, then might all the inferior Orders, such as those of the Presbyterate and Dioconate be reckon'd temporary and extraordinary, seeing Presbyters and Deacons were allow'd the like uncommon Gifts. Nay, this was the Case of many who never entred into Orders at all.

But allowing the Adversaries all that they can desire in this Case, viz. That as these uncommon Gists were bestow'd upon an extraordinary Account, so they are an Argument of an extraordinary Office. Yet must they at the same time grant, that that Office should continue as long as these Gists were necessary, at least as long as they actually lasted. This is so obvious to all who consider the Connection twixt the End and the Means, that they can-

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one, cannot well deny the other.

If then it was not only necellary that these Gifts should, but likewile really did continue p the Church, after the Death of the Apolles. Nay more, after that Ara, from which the Presbyterians are pleas d to date the Commencement of an Episcopal Preeminence, properly to called; then must they acknowledge. that as these Gitts did not, so neither was that Superiority of Office, with which they were invetted to expire with the Apollies.

And that it was necessary these Gifts should be deny'd by the Presbyterians, who make fuch mighty Presences to some of them, even to this Day. Nor can it well be doubted by any who consider the Ends for which they were

principally bellow'd.

For what were these Ends, but to qualify the Ministers of our Lord, in their fiest preaching of the Gospel to, and planting of Churches, in all Nations, and to be the Credentials of their Million. But 'tis certain, that how far loever the Labours of the Apostles extended, and however successful their Endeavours were yet were there fundry Nations, who heard not the joyful Sound till after their Death, and even in these Nations, thro' which they Preaching. How many, perhaps the great test

test part did still persist in their Insidelity indeed very many do, even to this Day?

If then the Design of bestowing these un common Gifts, and of raifing up fuch extraordinary Officers as the Apostles are suppos'd to be, was in Order to the Conversion of at least the preaching of the Gospel to all Naand if farther, after all the Apostle's Pains, there were some Nations, who had not lo much as heard the Gospel preach'd, and great Numbers in all Nations still unconverted, after the Apostle's Decease, the Adversaries must elther fay, that these Infidels were to be bound up for ever in Unbelief, which is contrary to Fact and God's declar'd Purpose; or else grant, that, as these Gists did not, so neither was the Office to expire with the Apostles, but was to last in the Church till the Ends for which it was appointed; that is, till the Conversion of (at least the preaching of the Gospel to all Nations ) were attain'd.

But to bring this Matter yet nearer a Point, tis as certain as humane Teltimony can make it, that as there was a very confiderable Part of the World which remain'd in Unbelief, not only for some Time after the 140 Year of our Lord (the latest Period to which the learn-dest Patrons of Parity are pleas d to fix the universal Exercise of a proper Prelation in the Church) I say, as many continued in the state of Paganism after that Time, so these

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Gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were so instrumental in the Conversions of the Apostolick Age; as they were still necessary, so were they actually continued in the Church, after that Time. How many Testimonies might be adduc'd to prove these things? But, I think, I need not trouble the Reader with the Proofs of the former, they being so notour; and the sollowing Instances may serve to prove the latter. Such as

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Melito, the Apologist, who, according to the exactest Chronology was Bishop of Sardis, about the Year of our Lord 170. was universally accounted of by the Orthodox of his Time, as a Man divinely inspired, if we may believe Tertullian, as cited by St. Jerom de Script. in Melit. and Polycrates Bishop of Ephesus, as cited by Euseb. lib. 5. cap. 24. who says of him, that, in all things, he was directed by the Af-

flatus and Suggestion of the Holy Ghost.

Did not Irenaus Bishop of Lyons, who liv'd about the Year 180. convert many Pagans in his Diocese by the Miracles which he wrought? And we are the rather to believe this, that he himself assures us, Lib. 2. cap. 57. Adversus Hæreses: And so does Eusebius, Hist. Eccles. lib' 5. cap. 7. That miraculous Gists and Powers were very common in his Time. Was not Gregory, Bishop of Neocæsarea, who flourish'd about the Year 240; that is a hundred Years after the pretended Æra) sirnamed Thaumatur-

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gus,

gus, because of the many Miracles which he wrought, in converting the Pagans of that Place, where they were very dumerous. Whoever would be fully satisfied about this, let them consult Gray Mis in vir. Greg. Thank & S. Rapt de San. Sanct. Cap. 19. Who affirms, that, upon the Account of his Miracles, the very Gentile, were wont to call him a second Moser. And we are the rather to regard what they testily in this Case, that they were Natives of Neocasarea; that they lived within less than a hundred Years after St. Gregory; and what is more considerable, were capable of deriving their Information from their Grand-mother Macrina, who was her felf a Disciple of the Wonder workers, and instructed them when they were Youths.

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And shall I add what St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, and the great Ornament of the third Age affures us concerning himself, that he was blest with uncommon Measures of the di-

vine Spirit?

From all which it appears, that as the first preaching of the Gospel to, and planting of Churches in all Nations ( which were the Ends ) were not attained for a considerable Time after Blondel's Æra; so neither did the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost ( which were the Means in order to these Ends ) cease. And consequently the Apostolick Office, which was the principal Vehicle of these Gifts ( or if

Was bee principal transic

was it less chiefly appointed for these Ends )
as it ought to have; 'so no doubt it actually

was comineed with the Church,

If thus the Apostolick Office lasted, at least a hundred and torty years after the Death of the longest hundred among them, then was it (not as the Presbyterians pretend) peculiar to the Twelve. And further, seeing it was continued, there must also be an Order of Men continued in the Church, who shall exercise the same, while it lasts; and who else can these be, than they who not only pretend to be, and were universally esteemed by the Church in those Days; as the Successors of the Apostles; but were approven of by God in the most eminent Manner, by his bestowing upon them the extraordinary Gists of the Holy Ghost, and these were the Bishops of the Church.

This Reasoning is good enough, ad hominem, and does, I hope, sufficiently expose the Weakness of the Presbyterian Evasion: But there is one thing of which it gives me the Hint, that, in my Opinion, is a plain Demonstration for

Episcopacy. And 'tis this,

Seeing after that Time, in which a proper Episcopacy is acknowledged to have universally obtained, severals (whom the Adversaries of that venerable Order cannot deny to have been Bishops in the ordinary Acceptation of that Term) were allowed the Gists of the Holy Chost; tis certain that their Office was of divise

divine Institution. For it is not to be suppos'd that our Lord wou'd have vouchsafd them these especial Donatives of Heaven, which they employ'd in the Discharge of the Episcopal Office. had it been (what the Presbyterians common. ly call it ) an Antichristian Usurpation.

Thus, if the Office of an Apostle be of divine Institution, that of a Bishop must be so too the Credentials for the Mission of both

being of the same Authority.

"What I have hitherto offer'd in Reply to that Shift of our Adversaries, that the Apostolate was an extraordinary Office, and, as fuch, to expire, some will, and I my self wou'd per-haps think enough, if not too much said, did not I know this to be one of their main Re-And therefore, that I may yet more fuges: fully shew, how groundless this Evasion is, I beg my Readers Patience to infift thus farther in 新。2006年3月6日1日 1日日本中国 its Disproof.

The Apostolick Office, abstracting from it, all Accidentals, I take to be, that Superiority of Power with which the Apostles were invested in the Ordination of inferior Church Officers,

and in governing them and the Church.

The Question then is, Was the Apostolate extraordinary, in this Respect; and as such to cease? It being in this Respect only that we are concern'd with the Apostles in this Debate

Now, it cannot be faid, that an Order of Governours, superior to other Officers, or,

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which is the same that a subordinate Form of Government, is in it self extraordinary; seeing (as I have already proven) such a Subordination is as suitable to the Ends of Government, as the contrary, if not more. And seeing such was the Form, by which not only the Jewist Church, but also the best part of the World was then govern'd: But I believe, when they call the Apostolick Government extraordinary, they mean that it was so, with Respect to that which was to be the standing Form.

Then I ask them, Why was the Form of Church Government extraordinary in the Apostolick Age: If they Answer, because there were extraordinary Purposes (which the ordinary Form cou'd not answer) to be served by

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If that which is supposed to be extraordinary, cou'd (as they say) only serve the extraordinary Ends of Government, and might (which cannot be deny'd) at least as well as any other have served the ordinary ones too; and if sarther, what they call the ordinary Form, be confess'dly desective, with Respect to the extraordinary Ends, then I appeal to our Adversaries themselves, if it be not much more probable, that Christ and his Apostles wou'd establish that as the perpetual Form of Church Government, which was adapted to all the Purposes of the Society, whether ordinary or extraordinary

( 72 traordinary, than that which could only ferre one of these Ends

"Can any thing be said more in Commenda." tion of a subordinate Form, than that (by the Confession of Adversaries) it was indispensibly necessary in the Church to serve its greatest Porpoles or in Disparagment of the Presbyterion Scheme, than that it was impracticable, even when the most considerable part of Christians, People as well as Pastors were under the immediate Conduct of the divine Spirit, Or is it likely, that after the one had obtain'd for a while, it would be exchang'd for the other? No, For, if that form by which the Church was govern'd in the Days of the Apostles, be in all Respects as good, and in many undeniably better than any other, then I think I may fafely conclude, that it never quant to be

But further, If the Presbyterians were delign'd to be the flanding form of Church Government, it would feem to reflect disparagingly on the Wisdom of Christ and his Apostles, that they cou'd not make it ferve all the Purposes for which such a Government ought to be appointed; but that to supply its Defects, they must wher it in with a Form, not only inconfisient with it, but which also in Atter-Ages wou'd be declar'd an unsupportable Yoke. Is it to be suppos'd, a if they had foreseen that Parity wou'd be ever after the fittest Form of Go-

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ment in the Church, or that it cou'd be useful in it, that any other wou'd have at all obtain'd. No, or was there any Necessity that any other wou'd have at that any other should obtain? Doubtless none at all; for tho it is true, the chief Power must at first be devolv'd upon the Apostles; yet when they found it necessary to ordain others for the Work of the Ministry, Why did they appoint several Orders of them, each subordinate to one another, and all of them inferiour to themselves? Might they not rather, and wou'd they not doubtlefs, (had they been Presbyterians) have admitted all of them into an equal share of Power with themselves: This were to act like true Parity Men. Thus acted the few furviving Presbyterian Preachers in this Nation, after the late Revdlution, who, tho they were in Circumstances very extraordinary when the Convention of Estates entrusted them with the whole Ecclefiastical Power; and the' they did otherwise abuse the same to Purposes too many, and melancholy for me to relate, yet wou'd not their Zeal ever suffer them to act inconsistently with the Presbyterian Constitution: Thus far I mean, that they never ordain'd any to Ecclesiastical Offices, strictly so called, of an Order inferiour to themselves, nor did they pretend to rule it over their Brethren : But, on the contrary, how food any receiv'd Impolition of Hands they were ipfo facto invefled

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And with a Power of Ordination and Juris. diction equal to themselves; and thus wou'd Christ and his Apostles have acted, had they been such Friends to Parity as the Presbyterians

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there is yet still something behind, which alone does sufficiently prove, that that Superiority of Power, which the Apostles exercis'd over the subordinate Orders of Clergy. Men, that is, over Priests and Deacons, was not peculiar to them, and confequently not extraordinary; and 'tis this, that the same was communicated to others, even to so many, that perhaps there was not a Church constituted by the Apostles, where there was not such a superiorOfficer appointed; at least this holds true of the greatest Number of these whereof there is Mention made in the New Testament. Nay, I think, I may fafely challenge the Gentlemen of the other Side to condescend from the Acts and Epistles, upon one Act of Ordination and Jurisdiction, about which such an Officer was not principally employ'd. It were superfluous to run them all over; let it suffice at this Time to alledge, that this was the Case of Ephesus and Crete, where Timothy and Titus acted with such a Superiority of Power: And let our Adversaries call these two by whatever Name they will, I shall not be displeas'd, provided they grant; and indeed they don't deny, that in Acts of Ordination and Jurifdiction

diction they were superior to Presbyters and

Deacons.

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For if they were so, then I hope I may be allow'd to conclude, that this Superiority was not proper to the Apostles: Or, if ye will, feeing it was communicated to others, it was

defign'd to be perpetual.

After this the impartial Reader might reafonably conclude, that my Labour and the Adversaries Wrangling were at an End, with Respect to the extraordinary Officers; but, to his Disappointment, let him know, that they are not resolv'd to quite the Field so soon. No, for they have ( or at least they wou'd perswade People, that they are provided with) a farther Reserve of extraordinary ones, with whom they are to fight it out to the last. But to be ferious, and to express my felf plainly, the Presbyterians grant that that Superiority of Power, which the Apostles exercis'd over inferior Church-Officers, was not peculiar to them; and this they are confident they may do, without the least Prejudice to their Cause: For they don't think that it follows, according to my reasoning, that it was design'd to be perpetual, tho' it was communicated to others, because these, upon whom it was derived were likewise extraordinary; and this, they say, was particularly the Case of Timothy Titus.

Tis

(76) Tis in vain to reply, that this Answer is but an Argument of a desperate Cause, or at best. but a Shift to fave the Credit of their Scheme: For if they be fincerely convinc'd that the Hypathefis they have adopted is true, whatever the Grounds of Conviction be, they ought to be excusid not to quite it upon a feeming Difficulty, but should on the contrary endeavour to ward the same off, in the best Manner they can, and to urge all the Reason's possible against the opposite Hypothesis. And the Truth is, I cannot hinder my felf from declaring, that what is last urged, is not, in my Opinion so contemptible as some would reprefent it; for I am none of those that can bully an Objection when 'tis confiderable, or that thinks it weak, because it proceeds from my Adversary; tho' at the same time they! must pardon me, if I do not reckon it un-answerable; and what are the Reasons which convinc'd me that it is not fo, I shall freely offer, expecting that if what I advance be just, the Adversaries, if sincere, will drop their Answer, and yield to Motives of Conviction; but if after all, they continue still in their Error, I must leave them to the Chastisement of their own perverse Minds, the greatest Plague of any, there being in my Opinion none fo great a Misfortune as Error tack'd to a Spirit, resolv'd against Conviction.

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Besides then, what I have already alledged with Respect to the Apostles, their being extraordinary, which is equally applicable in this Case; that which satisfies me that Time-

far as concern'd the main of their Office, is.

In the first place, That there is no Intimation made in all the Ads and Epiffles, of their being such. Now I think it is hardly conceivable of the Apostles, that if they had defign'd the perpetual Government of the Church should be constituted by Officers acting in a perfect Parity, 6 tho' they found it necessary that for some Time it shou'd be govern'd not only by themselves, but by others in the Way of Imparity ) but they wou'd have provided against their Mistake, who from such a Precedent wou'd be tempted to think, that the Church was still to be govern'd in the same Manner, by declaring explicitely ( as all the zealous Presbyterians of our Day wou'd have done) that the Subordination which obtain'd among Church Officers in the Apostolick Age was but Prejudice to that, Equality, which should be among the Ministers of Christ, in the succeeding Centuries of the Church.

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And One wou'd expect this the rather, that I think it impossible for the Presbyterians to adduce a Text one or moe, by which they can plainly prove the positive Institution of their Form of Government, to save them the

Labour

Labour of making fuch a Declaration. Tho, to be fure, if Jesus Christ and his Apostles had conceiv'd as favourably of that Scheme, as the Scots Presbyterians do, they would have afferted and determin'd about it, in as plain Terms as they themselves cou'd wish; at least it is not supposable that they wou'd in. finuate any thing to its contrary, as, in the In: stances of Timothy and Titus, Tam, and t Plurality vaftly supernumerary to the Presbyterian are perswaded, they plainly do, so very plainly, that the Authors of the Postscripts to their several Epistles, whoever they were, do expresly call them the first Bishops, that is, ordinary and fixed Prelates of Ephesus and Crete. Tis true thefe Postfcripts are no Part of the Canon of the Scriptures; yet are they of so much Authority, that the Presbyterians themselves have not yet dar'd to cancel them in the common Bibles.

To which it we add the concurring Testimony of the Ancients, (whose Authority is of all other the most Sacred next to that of the inspir'd Authors, and who, we may modestly presume, had better Occasions of knowing what Timothy and Titus really were, than the Presbyterians, who live at such a Distance of Time from them;) I say, if we add that these, with one Voice declare, as the Postscripts do, the Presbyterians will find themselves straitned

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( 790 ) How easie were it for me to add ( as some do in the like Case ) to the Number of Pages by Quotations to this Purpose. But I shall for once prefume, that the Presbyterians will frankly acknowledge, what they ought to know can be easily proven. And even the they should not be so just to their ownReputation or the Truth, as to be determined by the Authority of thesePolicipus or the Ancients: Yes I think I can prove by Authorities, which they cannot refule, that Timothy and Titus were of an Order Superiour to Presbyters and Deacons, and fuch as was always to be continued in the Church.

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In Order to which, let it be consider'd, in the first place, with respect to Timothy, that St. Paul had labour'd thro the Proconfular Afia, and particularly about Epbelus, for the Space of three Years, as appears from Ads 20 and 31, compar'd with Ads 19. and 10. For not only Ephesus, but all Afia heard the Word of the Lord; and fuch was his Success, that, according to the Complaint of Demetrius the Silver finith, Ads 19. 26. not only at Ephesus, but almost throng bout all Aha, had perswaded and turned away much People.

Seeing then St. Paul labour'd fo long, and so successfully in that Place, it is more than probable he wou'd have establish'd a Church, and ordan d these Officers who shou'd be the ordinary Governours of it. Nay, 'tis certain,

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that several Elders were ordain'd there; for in the 17 Verse of the 20 Chap. we find him call for them, when at Miletus; so that if ever they were to be; now the ordinary and perpetual Officers ( fuch as the Presbyterians wou'd have ) are appointed: And from this Time forward the Presbyterian Form of Go. vernment, was to be for ever exercised in the Church of Ephesus: And if so, then there wou'd be no further Use for the extraordinary Officers in that Place: And yet when St. Paul was to depart for Macedonia, after fo long a Residence at Ephesus, after having constitute a Church, and appointed Officers, who, cording to the Opinion of our Adversaries, shou'd be the perpetual Governours of that Church we are affur'd from I Tim. 1. 3, that Timothy was left there, that he might charge Some that they Jhou'd teach no other Doctrine. He receives Directions about their Qualifications who were to be admitted to Ecclesiastical Offices, 1 Tim. 3.1. &c. Their Maintainance is recommended to his Care, 1 Tim. 5. 17. And in the 19 Verse of that same Chap, he is advis'd not to receive an Accusation against an Elder, but upon sufficient Attestation: Norto lay Hands, that is, not to ordain any fuddenly. All which Passages undeniably import a Superiority of Power, with Respect to Ordination and Jurisdiction.

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Now, is it to be supposed, if the Presbyters and Deacons of Ephesus could alone have discharged these Offices, that St. Paul would have continued Timothy there, encroaching on

their divine Right?

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And as to Titus, we find him left by St. Paul at Crete, Titus 1. 5. that he might ordain Elders in every City; and, in order thereto, in the 7th verse, he is directed to inspect the Qualifications of such as should be ordained: And Ch. 2. 15. he is enjoined to rebuke Elders, no doubt, as well as others; as Ch. 3. 10. to reject, that is excommunicate, Hereticks. In a word, St. Paul sixes him there, Tit. 1. 5. To set in order the things (relating to Ordination and Jurisdiction) that were wanting, which plainly supposes that St. Paul before his Departure, had done something in these Matters, and that Titus was to act in a superior Capacity, with respect to the same.

Why then, I would know, was Titus continued at Crete, when (allowing the Truth of the Presbyterian Hypothesis) the Ends for which he staid there, might have been served by those who were already ordained; suppose them only to be the Elders of one, or of a sew Cities? Could not these, and would not they doubtless (had they understood from St. Paul, or any other, that the supreme and ordinary Ecclesiastical Power, was, by divine Appointment, lodged in the hands of a competent

Number

number of Presbyters) have detached them. felves in several Quorums, as the Presbyterian Itinerants did through this Nation, after the late Revolution, and so have more easily past over, and much more speedily have ordained Elders, &c. through the hundred Cities of Crete, than Titus, or any single Person, how.

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ever extraordinary, could have done?

I know the Presbyterians will think, they answer this Reasoning sufficiently, by denying that St. Paul, during his Abode at Crete, did ordain Elders, or constitute any Presbytery there: And in Reply to this, I should think it sufficient to alledge, that this is said without Ground, when they can adduce no Text which fays, or fo much as infinuates any fuch thing: Nay more, when it cannot be denyed that the Probability lyes on that fide which supposes he did ordain fome; feeing it is not likely that St. Paul, who was so successful in converting to Christianity, and was so careful in planting Churches, and ordaining Church Officers in other Places, would have neglected this at Crete, where we find he staid for some time: To which if ye add, what I have already hinted at, That Titus was left there to set in order the things that were wanting (which must certainly relate to Ordination and Jurisdiction, and plainly intimates, that St. Paul, or some such as he, had done something that way before) then will the Probability amount to a Demonstration, But

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But not to infift upon any of these Coniderations, I shall yet once more be so indulgent to our Adversaries, as to suppose, that St. Paul did not ordain Elders, nor constitute a Presbytery in that Island: Yet at the same time, I would have them consider, that if Presbyters were, by divine Institution, the highest Order of ordinary Ecclesiastical Officers: then doubtless, how foon Titus had ordained a sufficient Number of them, the chief Power was by divine Right to devolve upon these Presbyters; and Titus, his Evangelistick Office. must at that very Instant have expired in where the further Exercise of it Crete, would not only be superfluous, but unjust; and yet it is certain, that Tieus continued there ( however necessary his Presence. as an Evangilist may be supposed elsewhere ) ordaining Elders not only in some, but in every one of the Cities of Crete, and exercising what we properly call, An Episcopal Jurisdiciion over them, when ordained.

Seeing then it is undeniable, that Timothy and Titus did by divine Appointment exercise such Acts of Superiority in Ephesus and Grete, when there were fundry Presbyters there, it sollows, that Presbyters were not ordained for these Purposes, at least not principally: And seeing the Exercise of such Acts is still necessary for the Preservation of the Church, it

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further follows, that some such superior Officers, as were Timothy and Titus, are by divine Defig. nation to continue always in the Church.

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And that fuch a superior Order did obtain a considerable Time after this, is evident from the Instances of the seven Apocalyptick Angels. to whom our Lord directs fo many Epiftles by his Servant St. John: A plain Indication of his Approbation of that Authority which they exercised; especially considering that there is no Infinuation made to its Disadvantage in the Epistles directed to them.

And that these Angels were single Persons. and the Governors of these Churches. evident to any who shall impartially consider the 2d and 3d Chap. of the Revelation, where they are plainly characterized as fuch, very plainly, that perhaps all the Authors who ever commented upon them, whether Ancient or Modern, have supposed them to be

fuch.

Nor was it ever questioned by any, till the Interests of a Party obliged some to search for Criticisms, by which they might feem with their Followers to answer the Argument drawn from these Instances for Episcopacy : But the Evafions they have been forced to use, are so fenfeless, and have been so often exposed as fuch, that I am faved the Labour of exposing them further, or of repeating what has been already faid to disprove them; only I must add, that

that so groundless are they, and such is the Evidence of Truth on the Episcopal side, that it extorted from some Presbyterian Authors, and particularly from Beza, one of the most zealous and learned Patrons of Parity, a Consemon that these Angels were single Perions, and the Governors of these seven Asian Churches.

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e S Thus ye see it is plain, that as far as the Scriptures acquaint us with the History of the Church, its Government was constituted by Officers acting in an Imparity; which constant Practice the Adversaries of Episcopacy will be obliged to allow to be equivalent to an Institution; otherwise they must direct us where to find their divine Right, which I am persuaded is impossible for them to do. For after having engaged my Spirit to an uncommon Seriousness and Impartiality in the Enquiry, I must declare, that I could never discover the positive Institution of any Form of Government in the New Testament, much less of Parity, notwithstanding the noise Pretences of its Abettors to a divine Right.

Where then shall we enquire about it, when there is not the least mention made of its Institution or Practice in the Holy Scriptures? Shall we search for it among the venerable Monuments of Antiquity? Against this, I am sure, none can reasonably reclaim; which that I may plainly show, and that I may put the whole Matter ( as well what I have already

a Light as I can, before I adduce the Testimony of the Ancients, I shall here premise.

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That seeing it is agreed upon betwirt both Parties, that there is a certain Form by which Christ designed his Church should be perpetually governed, certainly there are some Means by which we may know the Mind of Christ and his Apostles (to whom no doubt he revealed his Thoughts) upon this Head. These Means every one will own to be, either a positive Institution, or the Practice of Christ and his Apostles and their Successors, narrated in some authentick Records, which is equivalent to an Institution.

The Presbyterians who plead for the politive Institution of their Scheme, must allow me to think its being improbable that Christ and his Apostles would exercise one Form of Government,

and at the same time institute another.

But passing this, doubtless this Institution (if there be any such) like all the other divine Institutions, is so plainly delivered, that all concerned and willing to be informed, may be satisfied about it; and yet the Episcopal Party, who, modestly speaking, may vye with their Adversaries for Worth and Numbers, cannot after (what may be reasonably presumed) a diligent search, discover the Institution of Parity.

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But put the Case, that they are so byassed by the Consideration of the Practice of Imparity in the Apostolick Age, or by some other Prejudices, that they cannot discern the Inftitution of Parity, which is so visible to the Presbyterians; yet even in such a Case, if the Presbyterian were by divine Appointment, the ordinary and perpetual Form of Government (however the contrary Scheme must necessarly be exercised during the extraordinary Age of the Apostles ) its Exercise must commence, if notin the Age immediately succeeding that of the Apostles, or soon after it, at least some time before the Fifteenth Century, and that fo notoriously and universally, that no considerable Society of Christians can be so blinded with Perjudice or Ignorance, as not to discern and acknowledge it.

This I think is so plain, that the Presbyterians will not desiderate its Proof; and if so, then need not they sear; nay, they may confidently appeal to the Ancients, and assure themselves of their Testimony in favour of that Equality, which they pretend to have

been instituted.

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On the other hand, these of the Episcopal way, who disclaim all Pretentions to a positive Institution, have Recourse to the Practice of the Church, particularly in the Apostolick Ago for their Precedent, which they think equivalent to an Institution; but whether the Pretentions

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nons of the one or other Party be just or not, neither can gain or loose by an Appeal to the the Ancients, but in so far as Truth or Error is of their side.

For the the Practice of the Apostolick Age feem to sayour those who plead for a Subordination among Church Officers; yet if upon a Reference to the Ancients, it appears that no such Subordination obtained in their Day, to a Demonstration, that Practice was extraordinary, and consequently no such Precedent as

those of the Episcopal side pretend.

Again, tho' the Form of Government which the Presbyterians pretend to have been divinely instituted, did not obtain in the Days of the Apostles, yet if upon the Expiration of that Age, or ( to make the Case as favourable for them as they themselves can wish ) at least before the Fifteenth Century, its Exercise did univerfally obtain, I shall allow it to be of divine Institution; so that the Controversy is now brought to this Issue, whether according to the Testimony of Ecclesiastical Authors, the Practice of the Apostolick Age, which we alledge for our Precedent, was continued in the fucceeding Centuries, or if the Institution which the Presbyterians contend for, was reduced to Practice so early and universally as it ought to be, according to their own Acknowledgement, or, if they will, sometime before the Days of Calivin ?

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But that I may yet further encourage both Parties to appeal to the Ancients, I desire it may be considered, That they have been always accounted of, by all the Catholick Professors of Christianity, the most unexceptionable. Witnesses, next to the inspired ones': For they are such as could not but know what Form of Government should obtain in the Church; some of them having been vouchsafed the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, which might infalibly affift them to understand the controverted Texts; and all of them having converfed with the Apostles, or Apostolical Men. from whom (we may reasonably presume) they could not but learn the Truth in so important a Matter.

Beside, they are such, sin whose Days the divine Form of Government obtained, its Alteration being morally impossible (as I shall afterwards prove) in that short Time which interveened betwixt the Time in which they lived, and the Age of the Apostles; so that if they shall be allowed to know what was the Practice of their own Time, they are Witnesses that may determine our Belief in this

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And as ye thus see, that there is no Reason to doubt of their Knowledge of the Truth in this Matter, neither is there any Ground to suspect their Honesty, when they declare what they

they knew to be such, otherwise I see not why the Enemies of our holy Religion may not be allowed to question the Authority of the sacred Canon, which was at first committed to, and as such transmitted to succeeding Ages

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To which add, that there is no imaginable Temptation to corrupt the Integrity of their Testimony in this behalf. Surely it could not proceed from Ambition: For they who bear Witness in this Case, were either such as were desirous of Preferment, but were disappointed; or fuch as were actually preferred. Not the former, for such would be so far from approving of the ambitious Designs of others, that they would certainly testify against them: Nor the latter, for I cannot believe, that these holySouls who discovered so much Self-denyal in all their other Actions, and who knew that their Exaltation to the Episcopal Dignity, was the next step to the Gibbet, or Cross, were tainted with this Vice.

Nor is there any better Reason to suspect their being determined to testify in this Matter, by any views of Interest, when it is considered that they willingly forsook all to sollow Christ: But allowing them greedy of filthy Lucre, were they the Fools to expect that their covetous Desires would be satisfied this way, when the whole Patrimony of the Church depended upon the charitable Contributions

butions of the Faithful, while they themselves held their Possessions by a very uncertain Te-

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Nor could their Veracity receive any bad Influence from their Love of a Party, there being none such formed at that time upon this Head; neither could they have any Prospect of the Differences that might happen to arise about it in after Ages, to by afs them in this Affair.

And shall I add in the last place, that they are Witnesses, whom the more learned Prefbyterians, fuch as Blondel, Salmafius, &c. either upon the fore-mentioned, or the like Confiderations; or as unwilling to betray the weakness of their Cause, would not seem to decline, and fuch to whom the Episcopal Party very confidently appeal, as I now do.

And in order to prove that the Subordination which obtained in the Apostolick Age,

did afterwards continue, I alledge,

In the first place, the Testimony of St. Ignatius, from the Epistles which he wrote soon after the sealing of the sacred Canon, and according to the exactest Chronology eight Years only after the Death of St. John, whose Disciple he was, and by whom, or some other of the Apostles he was constituted Bishop of Antioch, upon the Death of Evodius, the immediate Successor of St. Peter.

So that he had all the Advantages that could be wished for knowing the Truth, in the M 2

the Point now under debate. And if we shall but allow any Matter of Fact that happened before our Days, credible upon humane Testimony; or grant St. Ignatius to have been a Man of common Honesty, then will his Testimony in this Case be unexceptionable; how much more when it is considered, that he has been always accounted of, by the Catholick Church, as one of the most eminent Witnesses for Christianity, he having sealed his Testimony thereto with his Blood, soon after he wrote these Epistles, wherein he testifies so favourably for Episcopacy; so very favourably, that to alledge all his Testimonies to this Purpose, were almost to transcribe whole Epistles, out of which I shall select a few, and these, for the benefit of fuch as understand not Greek, taken from Dr. Wake's Translation, Printed at London, Anna 1693, referring those who are Curious, or suspect the Justness of the Translation to the Original in Cottelerius's Edition.

In his Epistle to the Ephesians, he mentions Onesimus their Bishop, Burrhus the Deacon,

and frequently the Presbytry.

Sect. 4. He adds, Wherefore it will become you, to run together, according to the Will of your Bishop, as ye also do; for your famous Presbytry worthy of God, is as exactly sitted to its Bishops, as the Strings are to their Harp. And

Sect. 11. He prays, That his Lot may be with the Ephefians ( among whom ye find there

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was a Bishop with Presbyters and Deacons)
who have always agreed with the Apostles, which
of all Men then alive he best knew: And if
they always agreed with them, why not in the
matter of Government? And if the Ephesians
agreed with them in this Point, so did the
whole Earth: For Sect. 3. of the same Epistle,
he says, That Bishops are appointed into the utmost bounds of the Earth.

In the Epistle to the Magnef. he says, Seeing then I have been judged worthy to see you by Damas your most excellent Bishop, and by your very worthy Presbyters, Bassus and Apollonius, and by my Fellow Servant Sotio your Deacon. And

Sect. 3. It will become you also, not to take Advantage of the Touth of your Bishop, but to yield all Reverence to him, according to the power of God the Father, as I also perceive that your holy Presbyters do. And

Sect. 6. I exhort you, that ye study to do all things in a divine Concord; your Bishop presiding in the place of God, your Presbyters in the place of the Council of the Apostles, and your Deacons being entrusted with the Ministry of Jesus Christ.

In the Epistle to the Trallians, Sect. 2. & 3. he repeats, if not the same Words, yet much to the same Purpose.

Epistle to the Smyrn. Sect. 8. Follow your Bishop as Jesus Christ the Father; the Presbytry as the Apostles, and the Deacons as the command of God; let no Man do any thing without the Bishop.

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shop. Let that Eucharist be looked upon as firm and just, which is either offered by the Bishop, or by him to whom the Bishop has given his Consent. Again, It is not lawful without the Bishop, either to baptise, nor to celebrate the Sacrament, but what seever be shall approve of, that is also well

pleasing unto God.

From all which Testimonies, I hope the Reader will allow me to conclude, that in the Days of St. Ignatius, there were three distinct Orders of Ecclefiastical Officers, Bishops, Prefbyters, and Deacons, acting in fuch Subordination, that the Bishop ( to express it in the plain Language of the holy Martyr ) did preside in the place of God; the Presbyters (only) in the place of the Apostles, That that Obedience is comparatively owing to the Bishop which Christ paid the Father; while to the Presbyters, such only as is owing to the Apostles, that the Deacons, as inferior Officers, did owe their proper Obedience to both. And last of all, that this Exercise of the Episcopal Authority over fubordinate Presbyters and Deacons, was not peculiar to the Churches to which St. Ignatius directed his Epistles, but did extend ( to use that Saints Words ) to the utmost bounds of the Earth; which in my Opinion, afferts the universal Exercise of the Episcopal Office, and fixes the Subordination and Submission of all others, in as full and plain Terms as can be conceived.

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But how well soever I may think these Conclusions demonstrated from the foresaid Authorities, yet are not the *Presbyterians* satisfied; and least they should be thought unreasonably obstinate, they offer some Exceptions, which they think, do secure them against the Force of this Evidence. These I shall now exa-

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In the first place, they say, That these Epistles which bear the name of St. Ignatius. are not his genuine Work. To which I answer, That St. Polycarp Bishop of Smyrna, the intimate Acquaintance of the bleffed Martyr, did after his Death collect some Epistles. which he called by his Name, as appears from his Letter mentioned by Euseb. Hist. Eccles. Lib. 3. Cap. 36. and recorded by Cotteleaius, Vol. 2. Pag. 188 of his Gollection of the Writings of the Apostolical Authors. This Letter Irenaus, who was the Disciple of Polycarp, mentions and cites a Passage from it, Lib. 5. Cap. 28. contra Heref. Thus one of our Brethren ( fays he ) being condemned for maintaining the Faith to be exposed to wild Beasts, said, I am the Wheat of God, and shall be ground by the Teeth of wild Beasts, that I may become the Bread of Jesus Christ; which one may readily conclude to be meant of St. Ignatius. But to put the Matter beyond Debate, we find this Passage as it is quoted by Irenaus, in Ignatius his Epistle to the Romans.

Origen

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Origen likewise cites these Epistles, and produces some Passages from them, which are still to be found in those that are now extant, such as, I have found it written ( fays he in his fixth Homily on St. Luke) in the Epistle of a certain Martyr, I mean Ignatius Bishop of Antioch, who was exposed to wild Beast's at Rome, I have found it written, I say, very elegantly, that the Virginity of Mary, was unknown to the Prince of this Which Passage, is word by word World: taken from his Epistle to the Ephesians. And,

In the Preface to his Commentary on the Cant. We remember ( fays he ) the Expression of a Saint, named Ignatius, in Speaking concerning Fefus Christ, My Love is crucified, and I do not believe that I ought to be reprehended on that account, Epissle to the Romans, and elsewhere.

Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 36. cites these Epistles to the Number of Seven; as do likewise Athanasius Epist. de Synod. Arimini & Seleuciæ, Hieronym. de Script. Eccles. in Ignat. and

Theodoret. Dialog. prim.

All which, with many other Authors, do mention these Epistles, and cite sundry Pasfages from them, which are to be found in those now extant; which not only proves that St. Ignatius wrote Epistles, but also that we have still some genuine Remains of them.

This our Adversaries will be forced to acknowledge; but after we have carried the Matter

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Matter thus far, they'll be ready to fay, In the 2d. place, That these Epistles were vitiated in the Main. To which it might be allowed a sufficient Answer, That they cannot name an Author who ever alledged such an Interpolation before Calvin, whom all Men

know to have been a Party.

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But I further add, that however the Name of this holy Man may have been abused by ignorant or designing Men, who sathered upon him their own spurious or interpolated Work; yet by the good Providence of God, these venerable Relicks have been preserved intire; the Discovery of which we owe to the Industry of the most Reverend and Learned Archbishop Usher, and the great Isaac Vossus; Men whose Integrity is as little to be questioned as their admirable Abilities.

The first of these upon Enquiry, happily found a MS. Version of these Epistles in Caius College Library in Cambridge, and another in the Library of Dr. Montague Bishop of Norwich, as much differing from the vulgar

Copies as agreeing together.

As soon after Vossius found a Greek Copy in the Medican Library, a true Original of Usher's Versions, and all exactly agreeing with the Passages cited from these Epistles, which are so frequently found in ancient Authors: This has determined the more learned and disinterested part of the World, to reverence these E-

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pistles of Vollius's and Usher's Editions, as the genuine Issue of that holy Father: Yet are not the Presbyterians satisfied, but do still complain of Interpolations, which, the better to ferve their purpose, they must and do pretend to have been very early foisted in, accor. ding to Salmasius, about the Middle of the second

Century.

Not to insist in disproving this Eval sion, by alledging, that considering the great Simplicity of these pious Times, it is scarce credible that the greatest Ornaments of the Christian Church, after the Apostles, were wicked enough to be guilty of fo base a Fraud, or weak enough to be imposed upon by these who might be thus wicked: But if they shall suppose either, I see not how they can answer the Enemies of our Religion, who complain that the like Freedom may have been used with the Bible in some fundamental Points, much about the same time.

But I would know of our Adversaries, what these Interpolations are. I hope they will not alledge that there are any favouring the then or after Herefies; and to fay that these Palfages, which affert the Distinction of Ecclesiaftical Orders and the Episcopal Authority, are of this Kind, is a mean begging of the Question; and so much the meaner still, that this can be proven from other Monuments of that Age tho' Ignatius had never written an To Epistle.

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To which add, That such an Interpolation. as is pretended, was hardly, if at all practicable, when these Epittles were scattered thorough Rome, Antioch, and several Cities of Greece. For, were not the admired Originals. or Authentick Transcripts probably extant, about the Middle of the second Century, the Time of the supposed Interpolation; how then could any once think of imposing so grosly upon the World, when the Depositaries of this facred Treasure, could have contronted them with the genuine Epiftles? Or, is it to be supposed, that they knowing the Imposture, would have suffered their Fellow Christians, or the venerable Name and beloved Work of the holy Martyr to be abused in so base a Manner?

Nor is it to be thought that the Depositaries themselves were the Criminals; for I am
perswaded it would sound harshly, even in a
Presbyterian Ear, to say, that so many, and
these the most excellent Churches in the
World, were thus early guilty of so impudent
a Forgery: Nor do I see how they could be
guilty; how Persons, removed at such Distances, could have universally conspired towards the Deceit; especially considering there
were such open Breaches betwixt them on other Accounts.

But it, notwithstanding of all this, we should suppose with the Presbyterians, that N 2 they

they who made no Conscience of lording it of ver their Brethren, would never scruple to forge Authorities, to patronize their Usurpation; even in such a Case these Men would rather have made bold with the Bible, which would have answered their Design better than any inferior Authority; and yet (say our Adversaries) there is not a Title in the holyScrip.

ture to this purpose.

But why, I would know, should any such Interpolation have been attempted? For the Testimonies that are pretended to be foisted into these Epistles, to favour the Episcopal Authority, are agreeable to the Faith and Practice of the Ignatian Age, in this Point, or they are not: If the former be allowed, then these Interpolators became Knaves to no purpose; but if the latter be, as indeed it is very much urged, then I would have our Adverfaries to consider, that many living about the time of the Interpolation, might have very well known the Faith and Practice of the Church in the Days of Ignatius: For, allowing them to have been fixty Years of Age, when Salmasius alledges these Epistles were vitiated, they must then have been twenty when they were written; so that they could not but know, whether the Faith and Practice of the Church about the Middle of the second Century was agreeable or disagreeable to what was professed and practised in the Beginning

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Interpolation? If the former, still why any Interpolation? If the latter, how could any think of perswading such, that there were Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons in the Days of St. Ignatius, when they most certainly knew the contrary?

And if we shall, as we reasonably may suppose them to have seen the genuine Epistles, then we may conclude, that as it was next to impossible to deceive such by spurious Ones, so it is highly improbable that they would suf-

fer others to be deceived.

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These or the like Considerations have probably made our Adversaries so sensible of the Weakness of this Evasion, that they they be possessed of Spirits too obstinate, ingenuously to own their Conviction, yet has it forced them to use another Subtersuge, which is, that allowing these Epistles to be genuine, they contain nothing contrary to their Scheme. Ignatius's Bishop, according to them, corresponding to their Parish Minister; the Presbyters and Deacons to their ruling Elders and Deacons.

Before I offer to expose this Exception, I wish the Reader to consider with me, whether it would not argue a more candid Spirit, and a greater Love to Truth in the Party, to have put the Debate upon this Issue, and to have urged this Exception at first, than to force us to the needless Trouble to prove one of the plainest

( 102 )

plainest Matters of Fact; the Truth of which, all the World believed before, and they them. selves are obliged to allow it at last; tho' I must say, their Cause owes very much to the Confidence of their Allegations, which can make an Officer of Calvin's Institution pass for one

of divine Right.

For altho' it have nothing strange in it, that these Gentlemen of Sente and Honour, whom either Interest or Education has embarked in the Presbyterian Bottom, and who do not screw Matters to a Jure Divino Height, but too commonly form their Notions of Ecclesiastical Polity upon their Model of the Civil, should accept of the Share of Power offered them by their Divines, feeing all Men are ambitious of Authority, and Laymen love to have it in theirPower, that they can check the Priests: But that Presbyterian Authors, and which is more, their Church Representative should found the sacrilegious Usurpation of ruling Elders upon Texts of Scripture, when there is not a Title concerning them in the Bible; nay, when fuch an Officer was never heard of in the Church, till fifteen hundred Years after the sealing of the Canon of the Scriptures, fixes fuch an Impression of their Ignorance, or Disingenuity upon knowing and honest Minds, as all their popular Arts can never cancel.

This was my Sense of the Matter, long e're I deserted them in other Points; and this seems

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103 to be the weak Side of the Party, their more learned Advocates having abandoned its Defence: But least they should say, That these are words of Course, and used only of Design to evade the Force of their unanswerable Exception: And that I may put the Argument for the Episcopal Preeminence from the Authority of St. Ignatius, in a due Light, and

vindicate it from their last Evasion,

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I say, that the Presbyters, mentioned by Ignatius, did preach and administrate the Sacraments: Thus in the Epistle to the Smyrn. Let that Eucharist be looked upon as firm and just, which is either offered by the Bishop, or by bim to whom the Bishop has given his Con-Sent. Again, It is not lawful without the Bishop, neither to Baptize nor to celebrate the Sacrament, but what soever he shall approve of, that is also well pleasing to God; which plainly proves, that tho' the Bishop was invested with the chief power of dispensing these holy Ordinances, yet might the Presbyters perform them by his Allowance, and therefore they were not Elders according to the Presbyterian Fashion; seeing they pretend to no fuch Power, nor can their Parish Minister (who, they fay, is the true Ignatian Bishop) communicate the same to them.

But I add, that the Presbyters in St. Ignatius's Days, were subject to the Bishop: This does fully appear from the Testimonies formerly merly cited: If then these Presbyters were such as the modern ruling Elders, either this their Subjection must relate to the Bishops, superiour Power in the Administration of Sacraments and Ordination, or to the Power of Jurisdiction: Not the former; for how can they be accountable in these respects, when they are not supposed to be at all concerned in these Matters; and to say that this Subjection relates to Acts of Jurisdiction, is to destroy that Parity of Power, of which all Presbyters, whether preaching or ruling, are equally possessed

But altho' there were nothing in these Epistles, whereby to distinguish the Presbyters mentioned there from meer ruling Elders, yet does the Silence of the Scriptures sufficiently intimate that they are Ministers of a later

according to the Presbyterians.

Creation.

For the we have there an Enumeration made of all Church Officers, and their Qualifications, even those of a Deacon (an Officer inferior to the ruling Elder) specified; yet is there no Mention made of any such Officer or his Qualifications; whence I conclude there was none such in these Days.

This will yet the more plainly appear, if we consider, that all the Ecclesiasticks in the Apostolical Age, were initiated into their respective Offices, by the Imposition of Hands; whereas ruling Elders are admitted by no such

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Ceremony; or if there be any Solemnity used at all in their Designation to the Office, it is performed by every parish Minister in his private Congregation; which how contrary it is to Presbyterian Principles; and if this be not to exercise the sole Power of Ordination (which is not so much as pretended to by Bishops) I leave it to our Adversaries to consider.

The Scriptural Presbyters were likewise to continue ad vitam aut culpam: But the Presbyterian Elders, after a Years Clerkship, return

to their Original Lay-State.

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And the former were allowed their proper Maintainance, these latter plead no Title to any such thing; nay, are so far from Gaining, that they are rather Losers, by the Bargain; their honest Trades being frequently interrupted by their scandalous Usurpation.

Which in Sum, amounts to a plain Demonstration, that the Modern ruling Elders are
not such as were the Scriptural or IgnatianPresbyters; which is this further confirmed. Were
there any Foundation for such an Office in
the Holy Scriptures, whence was it that
ruling Elders did so early, so universally, and
so tamely give up their divine Right, that
there is no once Mention made of any such
by divine Right in the Homilies and Commentaries of the Fathers; where the other Ecclesiasticks are so often mentioned; nor in the Acts of any Council,
whether General or Provincial, where they
should

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should have been present? And if so, their Names would have been recorded as well as those of the other Ecclesiasticks who were there

And this Silence of the Ancients is fo much the stronger Argument against these Elders, that the *Presbyterians*, who have so loudly accused them of enlarging, cannot well blame them for lessening the Clerical Category,

And that the *Presbyterian* Deacons do as little correspond to the Scriptural, and by Consequence to the *Ignatian* Deacons, will

thus briefly appear.

The primitive Deacons did Preach and Baptize, which the others cannot do, therefore they are not the same. Thus Philip, who we find is ordained a Deacon, Ads 6. does Preach and Baptize, Ads 8. 12, 13. which we are to presume he did in the Capacity of a Deacon, when we read of no fecond Ordination for these Purposes: Nay, that he was no other than a Deacon, or that he did not perform these Offices as an Evangelist, as the Presbyterians pretend, is evident from the 14, 15, 16, and 17 verses of that Chapter, where we find Peter and John commissioned by the Apofiles to confirm the Samaritans; which Office Philip could have discharged, had he been an Evangelift.

The ancient Deacons did also constitute one of the ordinary and perpetual Orders of Ecclenasticks: Thus in the Days of Ignatius,

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where there were a Bishop and Presbyters, here were always Deacons; and thus it continued to be in the succeeding Ages of the Church; whereas the Presbyterian Deacons are only in a few of the larger Towns, there being none such in any other part of the Nation; a fundamental Defect, if they believe them to be of divine Institution, or rather a Demonstration that they believe no such thing.

Thus I have endeavoured to affert the Authority of St. Ignatius's Epistles; but if any of my Readers are not yet fully satisfied, I refer them to the incomparable Dr. Pearson's Vindiciae Ignatianae, and to the learned Dupin's History of Ecclesiastical Writers, which will afford them all the Satisfaction that can be

reasonably desired.

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So that upon the whole, I hope I may be allowed to conclude, that in St. Ignatius's Days, there were three distinct Orders of subordinate Officers; Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons.

But that this Truth may be yet more fully established in the Mouth of two other Wit-

nesses, I add,

In the second place, the Testimony of Clemens Bishop of Rome, who, according to the unanimous Opinion of the Ancients, was the Fellow labourer of St. Paul, and one of those whose Names were written in the Book of Life, Phil. 4.

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tion. In his first Epistle to the Cerinthians, which Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. 3. cap. 16. 38. lib. 5. cap. calls, A most excellent and marvelous writing, received by all, reverenced next to the holy Scriptures, and as such, for some Ages, read in the Church: And he does thus favourably deliver himself in behalf of this Epistle, while he distinguisheth it from another, ascribed to the same Saint, which he reckons of

less Authority.

St. Jerom also in his Catalogue of Ecclefiastical Writers, in the Article of Clemens, commends its Usefulness, as indeed all others do, whether Ancient or Modern; nor is its Authority questioned by any of Character among the Presbyterians: In this Epistle, Isay, when discoursing of the due Manner of performing Christian Sacrifices, he writes, Sect. 40. God has ordained by his supreme Will and Authority, both where, and by what Persons they are to be performed, that so all things being piously done into all well pleasing, they may be acceptable unto bim. They therefore who make their Offerings at the proper Seasons, are happy and accepted; because that obeying the Commandments of the Lord, they are free from Sin; and the same care must be had of the Persons that Minister unto him: For the chief Priest has his proper Services, and to the Priests their proper Place is appointed; and to the Levites appertain their proper Ministries; and the Laymen is confined within the bounds of In what is commanded to Laymen.

( 109 )

In which Passage there are three distinct Orders of Ecclesiasticks mentioned, viz The Chief Priest, Priests and Levites, synonimous Terms, sometimes used by the Ancients, for Bishop, Presbyters and Deacons, and these too very suitable, especially when treating (as this Authors does) of Sacrifices; as 'tis here likewise intimated, that to each of these different Orders, such a Distinction of Offices do belong, as formerly obtained among the High Priests, and Levites under the Jewish Dispensation; which is further confirmed by the Authority of St. Jerom (that pretended Patron of Parity) who says, What Aaron and his Sons were that we know the Bishops and Presbyters are.

Let me add in the third place, the Testimony of Adrian, who in his Letter to Servianus (according to some Severianus) the Consul, transcribed by Vopiscus inter Scriptores, Hist. August. cum notis Salmas. & Casaub. Vol. 2. pag. 720. writing concerning the Manners of the Agyptians, says, There are Christians who worship Serapis, and they are devoted to Serapis, who call themselves the Bishops of Christ. There no Ruler of the Synagogue, no Christian Presbyter,

who does not, &c.

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Upon which Passage, I observe, That however his Prejudices, or his Informers may have imposed upon the Emperor, with respect to the Idolatry of the Ægyptian Christians;

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or, if we should grant, that to prevent the exquisite Torments threatned and often insticted by their cruel Persecuters, some Bishops and Presbyters, as well as other Christians, wor, shipped that Idol; yet so notorious was the Distinction of Bishops and Presbyters, when Adrian was in Ægypt, Anno Christ. 131, that he supposeth it as an undoubted Truth; and, upon his Certainty in this Matter, sounds a severe Charge against the Persons thus distinguished.

It were easie to quote some other Authors to the same purpose, and improve upon them, such as that of Irenaus, Lib. 3. Cap. 3. Contra Heres. We can reckon them, says he, who were appointed Bishops by the Apostles in the Churches, and their Successors to our Day: To whom also they committed these Churches, delive-

ring to them the same Dignity of Power.

And that of Tertullian (who began to flourish at the same time with Irenaus, that is, in the Declension of the second Century) who says, Lib. de Baptismo, The high Priest, who is the Bishop, has the right of giving Baptism, after him the Presbyters and Deacons, but not without the Pishop's Authority

the Bishop's Authority.

But as these three, whose Testimonies I have insisted upon, are most unexceptionable, so they are sufficient to prove, that in the Beginning of the second Century, soon after the Death of the Apostles, there were in the Church ( 111 )

Church three distinct Orders of Officers; Bihops, Presbyters, and Deacons, acting in such Subordination, that the Deacons were subject to the Bishop and Presbyters, as both Presbyters and Deacons were to the Bishop.

Which to me is a Demonstration, that the Imparity, which obtained in the Apostolick Age, was not then, nor ever ought to be interrupted; or if ye will, that the Episcopal Authority, and the Subordination of Presbyters and Deacons, which obtained so early,

must be of divine Institution. Seeing such an Alteration as the contrary

must suppose, was morally impossible in that short Time, which interveened betwixt the Death of the Apostles or Apostolical Men, and the Date of the Testimonies of my two first Witnesses; the most extensive Stretch of the one from the other, being only that of ten or twelve Years: For, supposing the Presbyterian to be the divine Form of Government, how could it once enter into the Thoughts of Men, who had shared in, or been subject to this Government, to attempt or allow its Change?

And here I cannot but express my Pity towards the Presbyterians, whose Cause makes them disparage common Christianity so far, as to alledge, That the best Christians, that ever lived after the Apostles, deserted the good Cause, and concurred towards this wicked Re-

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That Clemens, Ignatius, &c. who sealed their Testimony to the fundamental Truths of Christianity, with their Blood, did in Contempt of the divine Institutions, usurp an Antiscriptural Authority. What could have tempted them to have been thus guilty? Not the love of Riches, seeing they for sook all for the sake of Christ: Nor could it proceed from Ambition, when they knew that their Promotion rendered them the more obnoxious to the Fury of their Persecuters: For the greatest Honour they attained to, by being raised to the Episcopal Throne, was to be ranked among the most eminent in the noble Army of Martyrs.

But supposing these Men as wicked as the Presbyterians could wish them; yet whence was it that the Presbyters and Deacons suffered such an Encroachment to be made upon their divine Right, without the least Complaint; or that the People submitted to such an Antichristian Usurpation without any

Noise?

And tho' we should suppose that this might have happened in a Corner (which by the by is contrary to Fact): Yet how can it be reasonably alledged, that the Catholick Church spread, thorough the whole Earth, composed of so many distant Nations of such different Interests and Humours, should with one Consent; and immediately after the Death of the

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Apostles, have conspired to shake off the easie Yoke of Presbytry, which Christ and his Apostles had laid upon them, and have submitted to the Tyrrany of Prelacy, which they had condemned, without any Opposition; nay, with the same Reverence which they paid to

any of the divine Institutions.

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Will any, but such as are fatally influenced by the Spirit of a Party, ever believe that they who have been always reverenced as holy Martyrs, were wicked Usurpers; that their fellow Presbyters willingly became their Slaves; and that the most zealous People, that ever professed the Christian Faith, were stupidly unconcerned upon this Change in the Government of the Church, when they would have sacrificed their Lives to oppose such a Revolution in the State.

Let us only suppose these early and excellent Christians equally zealous with the Modern Presbyterians (which is a very modest Supposition) they would no doubt have disproved the Innovation, and asserted their just Right, if not with Sound of Trumpet and beat of Drum, at least by a modest Remonstrance.

And yet when Antichristian Prelacy is supposed to be universally established upon the Ruins of fure Divino Presbytry; there is no considerable Body of Dissenters, not one Presbytry, not a single Presbyter or Deacon, nor so much as one contemporary Christian testifying against the

one, or declaring for the other, or once infinuating that ever the Church was governed according to the Presbyterian Model. Nor did any in the succeeding Centuries pretend it did obtain, except Aerius and St. Jerom in the fourth. The one an infamous Heretick; Witness Epiphanius Heres. 75. so that his Testimony can be of no great Advantage to any Cause.

And St. Jerom's Hypothesissin his samous Epistle to Evagrius, where it is alledged, that the Precedency of one above the other Presbyters, was early and universally introduced to remove the Schisms which their Parity had occasioned, will do our Adversaries as little Service when it is considered, that St. Jerom lived too late to testify concerning Matters of Fact that happened about the Beginning of the second Century.

That he is at best but testis singularis; seeing he does not alledge the Acts of any Council, where such a Decree must be supposed to have passed; nor does he name any contemporary Author who gives the least Intimation of so

remarkable a Change.

That he destroys the Credit of his own Testimony, by contradicting himself in this very Point. In Epist. ad Heliodor. ad Nepotian. & in Comment. in Ps. 45. vers. 16.

That it reproacheth the Wisdom of our Lord and his Apostles, to suppose that they did

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id establish a Form of Government necessar-

y productive of Schifms.

As it is too severe a Charge to be offered against the Catholick Church, that it would endeavour to heal these Breaches by a Device of its own Invention, that is, Do Evil that Good might come of it.

In a word, this Hypothesis is liable to all I have said above, against the Possibility of any such Alteration in the Government of the

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And as this Change was not introduced by a Decree of the Church, so it did not creep in insensibly, the only other possible way, how such a Change could have happened: For if Errors in Doctrine, which may more easily pass without Notice, did not escape the Observation and Censure of the vigilant Governours of the Church in these Days; how can it be supposed that they would not have observed and condemned any Encroachments made upon the Constitution of their Society; a Matter very dear to, and obvious to the Observation of Men?

For, supposing such a Change, it must be thus remarkable, whereas formerly, all Presbyters were possessed of equal Power: Now, one assumes an Authority over them all; and how can this happen without Observation, when the Exercise of this new Authority is as sensible as is the Person invested with it, and

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by Confequence the Change must be as sensible as either.

And we are still the less to suppose such an insensible Change in the Government of the Church, when it is considered, that the like never happened in the Government of any other Society, whether of sormer or latter Times: To give an Instance of each,

The establishment of the Consular Dignity upon the Expulsion of their Kings by the Romans, and the Change of the Republican into a Monarchical Form, occasioned a vast Expence of Treasure and Blood, and are two the most remarkable Events recorded by their

Historians. And,

Notwithstanding all the Cunning of the Rebels joined to the Misfortunes of the Loyalists in the Days of our King Charles I. the Monarchy was not destroyed, nor the Commonwealth established insensibly: For as the one Party did not yield till after a considerable Resistance; so the other, in Spite of all their Successes, in a very short time, suffered the Punishment they deserved: Their Babel sell with them; the ancient Government recovered its former State; and, as the History of the whole has been hitherto preserved, so will it very probably be transmitted to latest Posterity.

Thus tho' I have only alledged these sew particulars yet might this be explained by a

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hat I know no Exception that can be urged to he contrary, if it be not that the Usurpations of he Bishops of Rome, and the other Corruptions which are charged upon that Church, are supposed to have creeped in insensibly. To which its answered,

That these did not obtain till after some

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That they were remonstrated against by many; nor were they ever allowed of by one half of the Church; whereas a subordinate Form of Government, namely by Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons, was sully established over all the Earth, without any Opposition or Noise, a Dozen of Years or so after the sealing of the sacred Canon; and if so, then however insensibly, we shall suppose this Change to have been introduced, it was undeniably sensible at the End of twelve Years; and in that case, this Hypothesis, which at first View seemed different from the former, is in effect the same; and is in Consequence liable to the like Difficulties.

So that upon a serious Review of the whole, I hope the Reader will conclude with me, that if a subordinate Form can answer the Ends of Government better than the contrary; if this Preference be ratisfied by the constant Practice of the Church; and this Practice probable by the History of the Church; as it

is undeniably, seeing the Jewish Form of Church Government was of this kind: If this Form was not abrogated by Christ nor his Apostles; nay, if such was the Government exercised by them; if as far as the sacred Scriptures carry the History of the Church, it is certain that a Superiority of Power was committed to, and that such a Subordination obtained among others: If these who continue the Ecclefiastical History, do testify that this Superiority and Subordination was likewife continued; and if any Change in the Government, from a divine to a humane Form, was morally impossible; all which I have proven: Then is a subordinate Form, not only preferable to any other, but is likewise of divine Institution; and if so, then seeing there can be no Church without its divine Form of Government, nor any Salvation without the Church, in an ordinary way, according to the Corrollaries formerly established, I concluded, that it highly concerned me to forfake the Schifmatical Party, where the Danger is fo great, feeing they not only want, but violently oppose the divine Government, and to betake me to the Bosom of the Church; to which, with the lawful Government, the ordinary Means of Salvation are confined; and in which therefore I can only be fafe.

So that, should I add no more, this alone fufficiently vindicates me from the horrid

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Charge of Apostacy, which has been so clamouroufly offered against me : But confidering that the Men of Latitude may think my Notions of Government fo flaunch, that they will perhaps be prejudiced against the Reasonableness of the Premisses, because of the Harfhnels of the Conclusion; and well know. ing that the Presbyterians will be at pains to perswade their Votaries, that much of what I have advanced, has been fufficiently answered by them already: I shall therefore endeavour to convince the former of the Reasonableness of my Change ( if they be fuch as believe in, or have any Apprehensions of the Nature of God) by an Argument more fuited to their way of thinking; and I hope to perswade the latter, that they have furnished me with more than one Reason for my Separation.

The next then I shall adduce, is sounded upon there their Errors in Doctrine; but before I proceed to name these, and e're I sound my Argument from them, I think sit to premise, That as there is none more ready to ask, so there is none who will more chearfully make Allowances than my self, for Differences in Matters of meer Opinion: But when Opinions, sundamentally Erroneous, and such as have a malignant Insuence upon Christian Life, are decreed by any Society, as Articles of Faith, to which not only an Acquiescence, but an inward Assent is expressly required by these who are admitted into

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its Communion; in such a Case all Protestants allow the Lawfulness of a Separation, their Disunion from the Church of Rome being part. ly occasioned by this. Each Party of Prote. stants alledge it as a Reason of their Separa. tion from one another, and all free Thinkers will sustain it as a sufficient Ground of separating from any Party: And that the Cafe stood thus betwixt the Presbyterians and me, will fufficiently appear, should I instance only their Doctrine of the eternal Decrees, and their Dependencies.

Decreas of God.

The Decrees of God, they define to be, His Eternal Purpose, whereby for his own Glory he hath foreordained whatfoever comes to pass. This is the express Doctrine of their Systems; it is a part of the Rudiments of Christianity, calculated for those of weaker Capacity, and is decreed to be a fundamental Article in their Confession of Faith, Chap. 3. Seet. 1. and yet it will need but the help of a very little Logick to infer from this Doctrine the most horrid and substantial Blasphemy: For if there is nothing that happen more frequently in the World, than Sin, as indeed there is not; then if according to this Definition, God hath foreordained what soever comes to pass, he has also ordained Sin; and if this be not to makeGod the Author of Sin, not by a bare Permission, but to declare in the most plain and express Terms that he bath established Iniquity by a Law; and if

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it does constitute Man necessarly a Sinner;

then there is no Significancy in Words.

So that it at once destroys the plainest Notions we can have of the Nature of God, who is essentially Good and Holy, and of Man, who is naturally a free Creature, but with this blasphemous Difference, to the Dishonour of God; that it fixes all the Guilt upon him, seeing this Decree is supposed to be the Result of his Will; while it excuseth Man; he being determined by a superior Force.

As it likewise destroys all Distinction betwixt Good and Evil, and consequently takes away Rewards and Punishments; so that if God has decreed Sin, it is our Duty to commit it, his Commands being the Standard of our Obedience; and if we are necessitated to sin, we are not to be punished for what we should and must have done, especially by the same Hand, which forced us to commit the Crime; and to alledge that they disclaim these Consequences, does but expose their Judgment, while they maintain the Principle from which they naturally flow.

But the Malignancy of their Errors, and the Reasonableness of my Separation from them; on that Account, will still the better appear; if we consider the Doctrine of the Decrees, yet more particularly as they relate to Mankind.

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According to Chap. 3. Sect 5. of their Con. fession of Faith, God has by his eternal and im mutable Purpose, and the secret Counsel and good Pleasure of his own Will, chosen some to everla sting Life; without any foresight of Faith or good Works, or Perseverance in either of them.

As Sect. 7. of the same Chap. He hath by the same eternal and unsearchable Counsel of his own Will, past by and ordained others to Wrath for their Sin. From both which Sections compared, it appears, that as the fole Cause of the Election of some, is the mere good Pleafure of God; so the primary Cause of the Reprobation of others, is the same mere good Pleasure; and that if some are elected without any Forefight of Faith or good Works, then by a Parity of Reason the rest of Mankind are reprobated, without any Regard to, or Forefight of Sin.

So that however they may think to foften the Matter, by adding that the Reprobate are ordained to Wrath for their Sin, in order to lessen the Horror of their Followers; yet is the Manifestation of God's Glory, without any Regard to the Actions of his Creatures, the general Cause equally alledged, whether for the Election of some, or the Reprobation

of others, Confes. of Faith, Chap. 3. Sect. 3.

To which add, That if God shall be supposed to have passed the Decree of Reprobation upon his forefight of Sin, then there is no

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uch unsearchable Depth in the divine Counels, as is pretended in the 5th & 7th Sed. seeing uch a Decree does evidently proceed accorling to the strictest Laws of Order, and the exactest Rules of Justice, which either our Reason does dictate, or the Scriptures do reveal; so that if our Adversaries shall allow Sin to be the sole Cause of Reprobation, the Controversy is at an End: And if they do not, they must resolve it into the mere good Pleasure of God, which will infer the Coincidence of this Hypothesis with that, whose Absurdities they would seem to avoid.

Which will thus further appear, if God has ordained whatsoever comes to pass, he has likewise ordained Sin. This I think I have sufficiently proven already from Chap. 3. Sect. 1. Confession of Faith, And if so, then has helor-dained Man to that Damnation, which necessarly sollows upon it, and in Consequence, Man is not the Cause of his own Damnation, but God who made him necessarly a Sinner.

If it be urged here, that the Commission of Sin, is presupposed to the Decree of Reprobation; then I thus argue, either Man could have escaped Damnation, or he could not; if he could, then Man is indeed the Author of his ownMisery, but this is rank Arminianism, so much condemned by those with whom I am at present concerned: But if he could not shun being damned, then I again alledge, that they must necessary the could not shun being damned, then I again alledge, that they must necessary the could not shun being damned.

resolve the Decree of Reprobation into the mere good Pleasure of God, which makes this feemingly more moderate Hypothesis, liable to the same Difficulties with that which suppofeth the Decree to have passed without confidering Man as fallen, or fo much as created.

If the Reader shall still think, that this is an unjust, because it is a horrid Charge, I desire he may confult any of the more knowing Teachers of the Tribe; and if they disclaim this Doctrine, I shall gladly own that I have mistaken their Principles and argued amis; but supposing they shall (as I am very confident they will ) be found to maintain the Doctrine of the irrespective Decrees in the horrid Manner which I have alledged. I doubt not but the candid and more knowing Reader will readily ex cuse my Separation from the Party, and conclude, that the Horror, with which this Doctrine should affect serious Christians or fober Men, might superfede the Use of any further Arguments against it.

But confidering that there are too many, who either upon Pretence of more exalted Notions of the absolute Dominion and free Grace of God, or by mistaking or wresting the Sense of some Passages of Scripture, do still maintain these Decrees as fundamental Truths; I shall therefore endeavour to undeceive such; or if this is not to be expected, I hope at least to

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de fo convince the better fort of Readers of the Necessity of my abandoning a Party which maintains Doctrines, to opposite to the clearest Notions of God, with which their Reason does furnish Men; so contrary to the Design of all Revelation, and the whole Tenor of the Scriptures; and so perniciously influential upon Christian Life.

And in the first place, however the Calvinists may pretend, that their Doctrine of the
Decrees does advance the Honour of God, because it asserts his absolute Dominion; yet
that this is done at the Expence of his other
Attributes, will too plainly appear, if we
consider, how blasphemously it asserts his

Holiness, Justice and Truth.

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This Doctrine will be found to contradict his Holiness, should we only compare it with this Postulate, which I hope none will dispute, That it is blasphemous to suppose that Godcanever Will what is Evil. For, if God has for the Manifestation of his Glory by an eternal Decree, reprobated the greatest part of Mankind, he has likewise decreed that Man should sin, a Mean without which that End cannot be attained; seeing, according to a received Maxim, he who determines a necessary End, must likewise decree the necessary Means in order thereto; so that if God wills the unavoidable Damnation of Men, he must likewise will their Sin, with-

without which it may be avoided; which is

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flat Blasphemy.

This Confequence is undeniable; if our Adversaries shall not grant it to be in the Power of Man to avoid Sin and Damnation; which if they grant, then there are no such absolute Decrees, as they have all along so zealously maintained; but if they shall still own the Doctrine, they must (if they would not forfeit the Reputation of their Judgments) allow a Consequence which slows so logically from it.

Nor will they lessen the Force of this Consequence, by saying, That God does not properly will, but barely permit Sin; seeing the Decree concerning the End, necessarly infers the Decree concerning the Means; and consequently he must be as much Author of the

one as of the other.

As it is likewise to no Purpose to distinguish here betwixt the Act and its Sinfulness; and to say, that God concurs towards the one, without being at all concerned in the other, seeing it is not as an Act; but as it is immoral, that Sin can be supposed to be the Cause of Man's Damnation; so that if God be the Author of such a Decree, he must likewise be the Author of Sin, not as it is a bare Act, for as such it can have no Efficiency towards that End; but as it is immoral, seeing as such only

only it is a Mean in order to that cruel End. The ave sure mades and a

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Nor is this Doctrine more favourable to the Justice of God, seeing it supposes him to reprobate an innocent Person, or such a one as unavoidably becomes Criminal, that he may be damned; which is contrary to the plainest Notions of Justice, which either the universal Reason of Men, or the Holy Scriptures do suggest: For what else is Justice but a firm and constant Purpose of giving to every one what is his due; or, as the Scriptures have it, Of rendering to every Man according to his Works? So that according to this Account of it, a Man should do his Duty before he can plead a just Title to a Reward, and must fail in it e're he can be justly punished; whereas, according to the Calvinist System of the Decrees, one is predestinated to eternal Salvation, without the least Confideration of the Performance of his Duty, and another is sentenced to everlasting Damnation, without any Regard to his Omission of it; which is to suppose God to act directly contrary to the established Notion of Justice, which is blafphemous.

To fay that God does thus dispose of Men. by virtue of his absolute Dominion over them, is but to blaspheme, one Attribute by complementing another; for the' He most certainly be Lord of his Creatures, yet must the Exercise of his Dominion be directed by his Justice,

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Rice, which is a Perfection, as essential to his Nature as the other; nay, we are infallibly assured from the Revelation which He has been pleased to make of his Will, that He does not proceed with Men as their Lord, the fuch he be, but rather acts in the Quality of a Judge; seeing he has proposed to them Laws, according to which he will pass Sentence at the last Day: So that if we are to believe the Scriptures (which one would think should afford us the fullest Discoveries of the Nature of God, and his Method of Procedure ) the Designation of some to Happiness, and of others to Misery, is not founded upon his absolute Dominion, as say the Calvinists, but upon his Justice, according to which he rewards those who obey, as he punisheth those only who transgress his Law. Whence I conclude, that feeing he thus proceeds, the doing otherwise would be unjust; and consequently that Opinion, which supposes him to proceed otherwise, blasphemeth his Justice.

And in the last place, this Doctrine highly affronts the Truth and Sincerity of God; for if he has fatally determined the Salvation of a certain select Number of Persons, and as fatally reprobate the rest of Mankind; then are his requiring of Faith! and Obedience from either, and his promising Happiness, or threatning Misery, Acts of the deepest and most cruel Dissimulation; how unworthy a Thought

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129 is it to be entertained of the God of Truth, that he requires from the Elect that Obedience, which he knows they cannot yield to his Commands. until he himself irrefistibly determine them to obey; to threaten those with eternal Damnation, if they do not obey, whose Salvation is as certain as his immutable Decree can make it; and to commend and reward them upon the Performance of a Duty, when it is not their Act; it being only the Effect of his irrelistible Power: As on the other Hand, how blasphemous an Apprehension is it of God, who cannot lie, that he requires the Obedience of the Reprobate; nay more, that he entreats and obtests them to obey; that he is angry and grieved when they do not obey, when he has so ordered the Matter, that their Obedience is impossible; that he should offer Life and Salvation to them whom he has doomed to Damnation, or at least to those whom he has de-termined not to save; and that he should sentence them to eternal Death, as incorrigible Rebels before they were born, or as fuch who were necessarily to become Rebels, that they might be damned: A Procedure fo cruel and difingenuous, that the most wicked and difsembling Tyrant can hardly be supposed guilty of it. How then can it, without the most horrid Blasphemy, be charged upon the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Truth?

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And as this Doctrine is thus opposite to the clearest Ideas that can be rationally formed of the Nature of God; so is it no less contrary to the Delign of all Revelation, and to express

Testimonies of Scripture.

For why should God declare it to be his Will, that we should believe and obey, in order to be Happy (which I conceive to be the End of all Revelation) when, according to this Doctrine, our Faith and Obedience cannot make our Case better nor worse; it being unalterably fixed by a prior Will, without Regard to either? So that if we necessarily will believe and be saved, or necessarily must remain in Insidelity, and be damned, according to his secret Will, to what Purpose does God's revealed Will require of us Faith and Obedience, as the Conditions of our Salvation, when our Fate is already absolutely determined?

But if our Adversaries shall allow, that God's secret and revealed Will are one, and indeed it is nonsentical and blasphemous to suppose that they are not; then are there no such absolute Decrees, as they do maintain; seeing according to his revealed Will, I Tim. 2.4. and in innumerable other Places, He would

have all Men to be saved.

In St. Mark, Chap. 16. ver. 16. our Lord declares, That he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned, which plainly supposeth, that a Man may the

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nay, or may not believe; whereas, according o our Adversaries Doctrine, he who is destined to Salvation cannot but believe, as he who s doomed to Misery cannot possibly believe; which is a flat Contradiction to the obvious meaning of the Text. And in this Text our Lord also promiseth Salvation, upon Condiion of Faith, and threatens Damnation, only inCase of Infidelity: But this Doctrine teacheth that a few only are saved, and the rest of Mankind reprobated, without Respect to the Performance or Nonperformance of any Condition. It were easie to quote many other Passages of Scripture directly opposite to this Doctrine, but I shall at this time rather briefly urge the two following Topicks, which I deduce from the Nature of the Thing, and the whole Tenor of the Scriptures; Such as,

In the first place, If all, to whom the Gospel is preached, are obliged to believe in Christ, that is, That he is their Saviour and died for them ( the contrary of which, I hope, no Christian will maintain with Maccovius ) and if none can be bound to believe a Lie, then Christ most certainly died for all to whom the Go pel is revealed; and if fo, then the Doctrine, which afferts the Salvability only of a

Select few, is demonstratively false.

Again, the Scriptures promife a Reward only to those who believe and obey, threaten them only with a Punishment, who Continue

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If this Doctrine be thus opposite to the Defign of all Revelation, and the whole Tenor of the Scriptures, 'tis in vain to urge for its Proof, some sew dismembred Shreds, or these Passages in St Paul's Epistles, which St. Peter 2 Epist. 3. 16. says, Are hard to be understood, and which some, even in his Days, did wrest to their own Damnation; especially considering how persiciously influentialit is upon Christian Life, which will thus plainly appear.

If a certain and determined Number of Men are so satally elected or reprobated, that they cannot possibly miss being saved or damned; then according to Mens Presumption or Dissidence of their State, they may either continue in the most sinful Security, or run into the Height of Despair, whilst his Principles render a Calvinist Casuist uncapable of checking the one, or encouraging the other: For by what Argument can a Person be engaged to do his Duty, who is persuaded that he is one of the Elect, who will sundoubtedly be saved, and believes that as he was elected without any Regard to his having done Good; so is he as sure of his Salvation as an eternal Decree can make

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him, notwithstanding all the Sins he can commit? Is it possible to disprove his Pretensions, when for any thing his Casuist knows, he may really be of the Number of the Elect? Or how can he disengage him from his Sins, when they do not hinder his being highly in the divine Favour; nor can they preclude his Admission into Heaven, were he never so Criminal? And is it to be thought, that a wicked Person of this Perswasion will renounce the Pleasures of Sin, which are so agreeable to him, when an immutable Decree does likewise se-

cure him of the Joys of Heaven?

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On the other Hand, should it prove the Misfortune of another to be perswaded that he is one of the Reprobate ( which I believe our Adversaries have known to be the Case of not a few)how shall they remove his melanchely Apprehensions, when for any thing they know they may be Just? Should they defire him to have Recourse to God's infinite Mercy, he'll readily answer, That he is precluded Access thereto by an irreverfible Decree; should they further entreat him to take Sanctuary in the Wounds of a crucified Saviour, he'll tell them, that he is none of the Elect, for whom only Christ died: And should they still urge him to believe in Christ, and endeavour to perswade him that the Exercise of Faith is a certain Sign of Election, and of his being one of these for whom Christ died, he'll always answer

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So that, according to this Doctrine, one may be impudently prefumptuous of his special Interest in the divine Favour, and its Maintainers not be able to disprove his Pretensions, and another may despair of having any Share therein, who may have as good, and perhaps a better Title to it, than the other; and yet they not be able rationally to perswade him that his Fears are not too well grounded; and as one may continue in his Sins, and yet it be impossible for them to prove that he shall be damned; so another may do his Duty, and yet their Principles render them uncapable of giving

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giving him any Ground of Hope, that he shall be saved: In a word, this Doctrine de stroys the two great Springs of Religion, viz. The Hopes which animate Men to Vertue, and the Fears which restrain them from Vice.

And as the Falshood, Blasphemy, and pernicious Estects of this Doctrine are thus evident, when considered in its main Branches, so will the same yet more fully appear, when it is pursued in its necessary Consequences.

One of which is, That God, to attain his eternal Purpole, does by an irrelistible Force, work Grace in the Elect, and at the fame time denyes it to the Reprobate; which not only Supposes Men to be what Des Cartes made the Brutes) so many Machines; but which is still worse, puts so many of them upon a Necessity of being damned: For how can I be reasonably commanded to Believe and Repent, who am supposed to have no Strength to do either? Or how can that, in Propriety of Speech, be called my Act, which was never elicited by me; particularly, how can I be said to Believe and Repent, when I do not concur towards either with the faintest Velleity? And why does God promife and bestow a glorious Reward upon Faith, and Repentance, when either are fo little my Act, that they are rather the necessary Effects of a distinct Power? Or why does he threaten and inflict eternal Punishments upon the Infidelity and Impenitence

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denyed the Power to obey?

Nor is this Doctrine more opposite to Truth, than it is destructive of Christian Life: For how ridiculous is it to exhort a Man to the Performance of his Duty, who, ye say, has no Rower to obey; and how can he be blamed for the Omission of it, who was never vouchased the necessary Grace; of which the natural Result is, That he must continue in his State of Implety, either expecting or despairing to be ever passive of this irresistible Grace; which, under Pretence of exalting the free Grace of God, excuses the greatest Villainies that can be committed, and discourages all the good Endeavours that should be used?

This will be yet more obvious to the Readers of the lowest Size of Understanding, should I introduce a Calvinist Teacher, endeavouring to reclaim a Debauchee of the Party. I shall suppose that the Divine has declaimed against Vice in a long and grave Lecture, and has seriously exhorted the Criminal to forsake it; but will the Sinner very rationally, according to the Principles of his Casust, but in Truth very lewdly thus ward off the Exhortation, You know, Sir, That I cannot effectually reform without this irresistible Grace, and I am not to blame that I am not yet passes of it: You may likewise remember, will be say, How often ye have told me, that the

( 137 Man should abstain from Vice, yet are his best Actions, without this Grace, but so many folendid Sins: And therefore feeing the Reformation which ye preach can be of no Advantage to my Soul without Grace; and feeing this Grace is not in my Power, I hope ye will, and it is but reasonable you should allow me to gratify the Body, seeing the contrary cannot in the least advance the Interest of my Soul; and you'll the rather grant this Allowance, because of the Uncertainty, whether I be one of the Elect or Reprobate: For if I be one of the former, I will sometime, were it only at the Hour of Death, be determined by this Grace, and so will certainly be faved, notwithstanding the lewdness of my bygone Life; and if I be not, why should I abstain from Sin, when such an Abstinence, without Grace can be of no Use to me ? And this Grace I cannot command; and if I be none of the E4 lect, I am not to expect it : Therefore feeing I am to forfeit the Joys of Heaven, which is my Misfortune not my Fault, you must excuse me if I do not lose the Pleas fures of Sin, which I may so freely enjoy but whether I be the one or the other, there is no Doing of my Ducy, fay ye, fliould I never fo much endeavour it without Orace; and therefore whether I will or not, I must comtinue as I am untilitifiell please God to determine me by his irrefilible Power 2004 odgs Should

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Should his Monitor yet further exhort the Sinner to pray to God for, and he certainly will obtain, this Grace; which if he do not, he is inexcuseable. He will be ready to answer, You tell me that it is the Prayer of Faith which only prevaileth with God, and Faith is the effect of his irreliatible Grace, fo that if my Prayer be acceptable, I have this Grace, and it is needless to pray for what I have already; and if it be not, why should I pray for what I am not to obtain?

Another Consequence of the Doctrine of the absolute Decrees, as false and mischeivous as the former, is, That they who are thus elected and irrefiftibly determined, cannot fall away totally nor finally from the estate of Grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the End, and will be eternally saved, Confession of Faith, Chap. 17. Sect. 1. And yet one would think, that the Exhortations to Perseverance, the Encouragements promised upon it, and the severe Threatnings, in case of Apostacy ( which are scartered through the Scriptures, and may be fo copiously cited from thence, were it needful in a Matter so plain) did evidently suppose the Possibility of a Fall; which alone sufficiently destroys the absolute Certainty of Perseverance. For to what purpose areMen, 2Cor. 6. 1. beseeched not to receive the grace of God in vain, if it be impossible to lose this Grace, so as not to be faved by it: Or why are they advised, Rom.

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139 J 11.20. &c. not to be high minded but fear, because of eheroodness and severity of God, promising goodness to those who continue in it, otherwise threatning to cut them off, if the true Branches can never be cut off? Thus one, I say, would think that these Exhortations, Promises, and Threat. nings are vain, otherwise the Doctrine of Perseverance is false; for either they contribute toMens Perseverance, or they do not: To say the former, is to contradict the 2d.Sect. of the 17th Cb. of the Confession of Faith, where the Perseverance of the Saints is said not to depend upon their free Will, or their hearkning to Exhortations, &c. but upon the immutability of the Decree of Election, &c. And if they do not contribute to it, why are they used ? How unworthy a Thought lis it to be entertained of a

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And as this Doctrine is thus cross to the very Design of the Scripture Exhortations, &c. so does it contradict many express Texts, from among which, I shall alledge one, and that is the tamous 6th Cb. to the Heb. 5. & 6. verses, where the Apostle says, That it is impossible for those who were once enlighted, and have tasted of the heavenly Gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and of the powers of the World to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto Repentance; which, in my Opinion, is as flat a Contradiction to the

good and wife God, that he should use such

the Doctrine of Perseverance as can be conceived in Words; it being evident from this Text, that they who were enlightned, and had been made Partakers of the Holy Ghoff Gc. might fall away: As it is also undeniable that they who are faid to be thus enlight ned, Ge. were in a state of Grace, it being a more particular Account of the Qualifications of fuch as were fo, than is to be found through the whole New Testament; nay more, so peculiar are these Epithets to the truly Faithful, that I believe I may Challenge our Adversaries to thew where any of them, much less all together, are applyed to any other in the Scriptures; but both the one and the other will demonstrative. ly appear, should I thus argue from this very Text; If they who are once enlightned, &c. may fo fall away, that it is impossible to renew them again unto Repentance, then they who are once in a feate of Grace, may fall from that Effate totally and finally; but those spoken of in the Text may lose their Illumination, Con therefore they may fall from the Elbate of Grace totally and finally. The Minor I believe will not be denyed. it being the very Words of the Text.

The Consequence of the Major (which with any tollerable shew of Reason can only be quarrelled: For, will they perhaps say. The state of Illumination, & mentioned in the Text, is not truly the state of Grace) is thus

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roven, Than State unto which Men (after aving once fallen from it) could not be reewed again by Repentance, is the Etate of Grace; but the being enlightned,
so is the State into which (after having once fallen from it) they could not be renewd again by Repentance; therefore the being

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alightned, &c. is the Estate of Graces The first Proposition of this last Syllogism our Adverfacies will not deny, if they confider that they who are in this enlightned State are threatned if they fall from it; but I fee not what their Loss could be if they did not fall from the Estate of Grace, nor what Advantage could redound to them by their Repentance owere it possible) if they were not to recover the Estate of Grace, feeing out of that State they are fill Children of Wrath: And the Minor ought as little to be disputed, seeing the Text exprefly affirms concerning These very Persons, whom I have proven to have been in a State of Grace, that if They flould fall away, it was impossible to renew Them again by Repen-

And as this Text does thus demonstrate that the Saints may fall away, which sufficiently destroys the absolute Certainty of their Perseverance; so the Scriptures do furnish us with too many Instances of such as have actually fallen from

that State; such as the glorious Angels, who became incorrigible Devils; the innocent Adam, who became a Child of Wrath; and therefore why may not others fall from a State of Grace who however much they may be endued with) cannot pretend to equal either?

But passing these, David, that Man according to God's own Heart, was deliberatly guilty of the most scandalous Adultery and horrid Murther; Crimes concerning which the Scriptures do so frequently declare, that they who commit them cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: So that if this Commination be not false and delusory. David was upon the Commission of these Sins, liable to Damnation; and if fo, he had certainly fallen from the State of Grace, feeing, according to our Adverfaries, none who are in that State can be thus liable; if then they shall not be able to maintain that a Man at one and the same Time, is and is not liable to Damnation, that is, if they shall not maintain, that both Parts of a Contradiction are true, then must they allow, that David, who, according to the Scriptures, was liable to Damnation, because of his Adultery and Murther, must have fallen from the State of Grace, feeing otherwise he could not possibly be damned. The Fall of David, particularly his Adultery, will yet be found a more pregnant Proof against the Doctrine of Perseverance, if we confider

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( 143 der that Pallage in 1 Cor. 6. 15, 16. where he Apostle disswading the Corinthians from Fornication, thus writes, Know ye not that your Bodies are the Members of Christ, Shall I then take the Members of Christ, and make them the Members of an Harlot; What? know ye not that he who is joined to an Harlot is one Body. Where it is plainly intimated, that these Corinthians were Members of Christ, that they might cease to be so, should they make their Bodies Members of an Harlot; it being inconsistent with Reason and Religion, and as I understand this Text, contrary to the Meaning of St. Paul, That he who is one with an Harlot, or whose Members become the Members of an Harlot, can at the same time be one with Christ, or a Member of his mystical Body. Now David having by his Adultery become one with an Harlot, must at that Time have been disjoined from Christ.

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Nor will the Case of his Son Solomon, who once was an eminent Saint, and who afterwards became guilty of all the Iniquities recorded in a Kings 11. from the 1st to the 1oth verse, be less straitning to our Adversaries.

For he not only took unto him strange Wives, contrary to God's express Command; but which is worse, he could not be satisfied with a no less numerous Seraglio, than 700

Concubines

Wives, and 300 Concubines, which is fo far contrary to the first Institution of Marriaga that he must be guilty of at least 999 Adulte ries; fo that if the fingle Adultery of the Fa ther deprived him of the Grace of God, which I have proven; then will my Argument in that Case, conclude still more forcibly against the Son; especially if I add, how that to please these Pagan Whores in his old Age, he advanced, and concurred himfelf at, the Worship of their feveral Idols; a Crime which strikes at the Root of all true Religion, and is one of the most hainous Offences that can be committed against the one true, and living God; a Crime concerning which God has so often and expressy declared that they who commit it cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; a Crime fo incompatible with the highest Attainments of the Professors of the true Religion, that it is inconfistent, even with the outward Profession of it. Thus, if repeated Adultery and Idolatry intercept the divine Favour, or deprive a Man of the Grace of God, then Salomon loft both: Nay more, if a Habit of any grievous Sin be inconsistent with a State of Grace, which our Adversaries confess, and indeed very agreeably to the plainest Philosophy, which teacheth, that two contrary Habits cannot lodge at once in the same Subject; then Soloman, who was fo deliberately, fo frequent, ly, and for fo long a time guilty of the most grievous

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grievous Sins (which I think will infer a Habit) did lose that Grace, with which ex confesso, he was once endued.

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Nor are David and Solomon the only Instances that can be adduced to this purpose; there are too many others of the same kind, mentioned in the Scriptures, such as Hymenæus and Alexander, who 1. Tim. 1. 19, 20. Concerning Faith had made Shipwrack, and were therefore delivered by St. Paul unto Satan, that they might learn not to blafpheme; which Passage plainly proves, that if fuch an Apostacy from the true Faith, and Blasphemy against the Author of it. as makes Men justly incur the Sentence of Excommunication, that is, a Sentence which infallibly declares that they are none of Christs, but really belong to the Devil, will infer the loss of Grace; then did Hymenaus and Alexander, who once had the true Faith, and by consequence were Members of Christ, lose the one, and cease to be the other.

Our Adversaries shall in vain endeavour to evade the Force of this Argument, by alledging that the Faith from which they apostatized, was not the genuine Grace of Faith. For how could it offend God, or harm them to lose that which was not the true and saving Faith? Or why should they be delivered unto Saran for renouncing the Faith, if it was not that genuine Grace; when without this (according to our Adversaries) they were

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were already in his Clutches? But that it was the true Faith is undeniable, if it be considered, that it is the same which Time thy is advised to hold in the 19th verse; or if we compare this Passage with the 5th and 6th verses of this same Chap, where the Faith from which some did swerve, is described to be a Faith unfeigned, proceeding out of pure Heart and a good Conscience, and such as did produce Charity, which if it be not the true Faith, it is impossible to learn from the Scriptures what is fuch: If then Hyme. naus and Alexander really apostatized from the Faith, which cannot be denyed; and if the Faith from which they apostatized, was the genuine Grace of Faith, which I have proven, then did they fall from the Estate of Grace; and if such was their Case, so may it prove that of others; and consequently that Doctrine which afferts the absolute Certainty of the Perseverance of the Saints, is absolutely false.

tho' there were no Exhortations, Threatnings, or Promises in the Scriptures which supposed, nor any express Text plainly proving the Possibility of a Fall, nor Instances of such as had actually fallen; yet might we be fully apprised of this Truth, that Men may fall away, by considering only the Nature of the Thing: For if the truly Gracious (as they call them) not only may be, but actually are guilty of very hainous Sins, which cannot

of be denyed; then either these Sins are offensive to God, or they are not: If they be offensive, that is, if he be angry with Men because of them, they cannot at the same time be in his Favour; and if they have lost his Favour, they have fallen from his Grace, which either is the same, or at least is an Effect of it; and to say, that they are not Offensive, is to say that they are not Sins,

which is the vilest Antinomianism.

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O! mischievous Doctrine, which at last refolves in this, That the most horrid Impieties are fo far from being fuch, when committed by the Saints, that they are still Children of Grace, and special Favorites of Heaven; a Doctrine which feems to have been hatched of Delign, to encourage the most dreadful Security, and to advance the Trade of Sin: For what need one perform his Duty, who is fure of Heaven; or what should hinder him to commit Iniquity, whom the most hainous Offences cannot damn nor deprive of the divine Favour? Rare Theology which thus lodges Christ and Belial at once in the same Soul! which supposeth an arrant Villain to be a gracious Saint! and which can extract the Works of the Flesh from the Spirit of God: These and many more such impious Feats it can do.

But I am so much shocked, and I believe so is the Reader, with the Repetition of these T 2 Impieties.

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Impieties, that I shall not pursue it in its other pernicious Consequences, nor mention several other Doctrines which I am ready to prove to be equally False and Mischeivous; and yet these are not only the Doctrines of their Schools, the Language of their Pulpits, principal Points of their Catechetical Systems; but are likewise Articles of Faith, into which they baptize, and which all who are admitted into their Ministerial Communion must own and subscribe: In a word, they are in the Sense of our Presbyterians so Fundamental, that none can be of their Communion who disbelieve them, and therefore seeing I could not prevail with my Self to yield any Assent to them at all, much less in the manner they required it, I readily was, as I necessarly must be, determined to forfake that Party.

Manner of their Worship, having sound the one so Corrupt and Desective, and the other so far from being the best, that it was very impersect. I shall willingly acknowledge, that it is not every Corruption or Impersection in Worship that will warrant a Separation; for if so, then could we never safely join in any publick Worship, seeing I believe no Society of Christians (except some of the maddest Enthusiasts, and the infallible Papists) will once pretend that their Worship is absolutely Persect; tho' at the same time they'll own

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that it should, in the Main, be so pure and perfect, with Respect to its Matter and Manner, that an effential Failure as to either, is one of the greatest Indignities that can be of. fered to God, and consequently such as warrants a Separation. The Protestants alledge this as one good Reason of their Separation from the Church of Rome; the Presbyterians pretend to excuse their Schism from the Church of England upon the same Ground. How then can the English Schismaticks, or their Brethren in Scotland well blame me for separatingfrom them upon that account? If then I can prove that their Worship is chargeable with fundamental Corruptions and Defects as to the Matter, and that it is not the best, nay that it is very imperfect as to the Manner; I hope they themselves shall (but whether they will or not, the knowing and candid Reader will ) fustain this as a third relevant Reason for my separating from them.

And in order to prove the Corruption of their Worship, I need only acquaint the Reader, that if their Doctrine be corrupt, so must their Worship be too. Now, that the former is true, I think I have proven in part already, and am ready to advance and maintain the like Charge against sundry other Articles of their Faith: That therefore the latter is no less so, is hence evident, because these very Doctrines which are the common Subjects of their Sermons, do likewise constitute the substance of their

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their Prayers; it being the ordinary Practice of their Orators (fuch I am fure it was when I was acquainted with them) to dreft that in Form of Petitions to God, which they had pronounced by way of Doctrine to the People. If then I could not in Confcience yield my Affent to these Doctrines, when proposed as Articles of Faith, much less could I join in offering them up in Prayer to Al-

mighty God.

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Corres Nor was this the only ( tho' it did indeed constitute a considerable part of the ) Corruption of their Worship: For I add, how could I pray (as they commonly do ) for the continuance of Presbyterian Government, who believed it to be Antiscriptural and Schismatical; or bless God for the Extirpation of, and beseech him to preferve this Nation from Prelacy, that Antichristian and abjured Usurpation, when I was perswaded that it was the Form by which Christ designed his Church should be perpetually governed? How could I thank God for continuing among us the Presbyterian Doctrine, or ask a Bleffing upon the Word that was to be, or had been delivered (Petitions never omitted in their publick Prayers) when I knew much of it to be Impious and False? Or, how could I bless God for, and entreat him to continue the Purity of their Worship, which in truth was very Corrupt, and at the same time pray ( which I must have done, had I continued among them

151 ) them till now ) that he might stop the the Progress, and baffle their zealous Endeayours, who advanced the fuperstitious and idolatrous Liturgy of the Church of England. without offending God, it being the most excellent of all Others; and without Treason against the Queen, it being that which Her Majesty practises, and has authorised the Exercife of, to those of the Episcopal Perswasion in this Nation? How could I own in the presence of God the Obligation of the Solemn League and Covenant upon us and our Posterity, and plead for the forgiveness of its Breaches. who believed it to be a Complication of Wickedness, and the Source of the greatest Mischiefs that ever plagued this Island? And laftly, How could I pray for a Bleffing upon their Kirk Judicatories in the exercise of their Discipline, which, in many Instances, I knew to be scandalously partial, and highly unjust?

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Again, tho there is not a more expression. Command in the Gospel, than that which enjoins us to forgive and to pray for the forgiveness of our Enemies; our Lord in his own Prayer, having commanded us, whether it shall be used as a Form, to pray, Forgive us our Trespasses, &c. or if, as a Pattern, in equivalent Terms. In many other places of the Gospel, he recommends it, as we also find that he himself practised it: In a word, tho the Practice of this Duty, and the offering up suitable Request

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quelts to God, be one of the noblest Exercises. and best Discoveries of the Spirit of the Gospel. yet are the Presbyterians so negligent of it that, during the two and twenty Years I was a. mong them, I don't remember that ever I heard one of them ( and I have heard fome hundreds) press it as a Duty, or once offer a Petition to this purpose to Almighty God; nay, they reckon it so far below Men of their spiritual Perfection, that some of them have in Contempt called it a piece of Episcopal Morality; a Complement, however otherwise meant, the greatest they could bestow upon their Adversaries; it being at once a Demonstration. that they are possessed of the Spirit of the Gospel, and that they themselves are Strangers to it.

memies. Nor do they only forbear to pray for their Enemies ( which by the by, is a fundamental Defect in their Worship ) but they actually pray for their Destruction: This is too true, tho' it be a heavy Charge; and if they deny it; I am ready to name the Criminals, and to ad. duce my Vouchers. 'Tis true they pretend to do this, because these against whom they pray, are Enemies to Truth, and Persecuters of its Professors; but no Pretence can excuse the Impiety of it; and I am affraid a flender Enquiry will discover that it argues the most fcandalous Partiality, and vilest Hypocrify: For, at the same time that they pray for the Destruction of some, upon Pretence that

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that they persecute the Servants of God; they immediately offer up their most fervent Addreffes for the Prosperity of others who are no less Persecutors, and neglect to offer up one Petition for a third fort who have fignalized themselves in behalf of such as suffer for Righteousness fake; which, in my Opinion, will infer a most unbecoming Partiality. And the I own that it is not fafe to determine peremptorly that Men are Hypocrites, God having referved to himself the Prerogative of fearthing the Heart, and trying the Reins; yet as far as we can judge of Mens Intentions by their overt Actions, there is too good Ground given to suspect their Integrity, whom we find expressing a Sympathy with some of their suffering Brethren, and execrating those from whom they suffer, without fignifying an equal Concern for others who fuffer as much, or an Abhorence of their equally cruel Persecutors: There is in this Case. I fay, too good Ground given us to suspect, that whatever be pretended, it is something elfe than a Regard to Truth, or a Fellow feeling with those who suffer for it, which does thus byass their Zeal; seeing this, were it fincere, would equally extend to all who are in the same Circumstances; and that something too probably, is, the remote Causality which they vainly think, thefe for whom they pray may have towards the Support, and which 10 1010 C 154 22 2012 2011

which they, against whom they pray, may have towards the Ruin of Their Cause; which at once argues them guilty of the most wicked Selfishness and detestable Hypocrify; and so much the more guilty still, that they would seem designed to impose upon the Omniscient himself, these partial and hypocritical Addresses, being immediately directed to Him. Whoever then would not be found to act directly contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel, and would not be justly charged with Partiality and Hypocrify, should resuse his Assent to any such Petitions?

Nor is it only the Sincerity of their Prayers which may be questioned; they have often given too good Ground to quarrel their good Sense. How many nonsensical Petitions have they been known to offer up to God? How many Blunders and Tautologies have they committed? And how incoherent for the most part are their Performances of this kind? Nor do I charge this only upon the gifted Brethren of the Laity, some of their Preachers ( these Mouths of their Congregations, who have been found to transgress against some of the most fundamental Rules of Grammar, Rhetorick, and Logick ) are no less Guilty. I know the telling of this fad Truth, will highly raise their Indignation; I am fory for it, but much more, that they should have given me theOccasion. If they shall alledge, That this is a malicious, as well as an unjust Imputation,

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155 fincerely affirm ( and methinks I should best now the Intentions of my own Heart ) that his Observation was only meant in order to heir Conviction and my Vindication: Nor is less True than Charitable, which they hould take care how they deny, it being Matter of Fact, and they know what kind of Probation such Matters are capable of: Nay, to easy is the Proof here, that should I pardon all the Nonfense and Blunders they have been hitherto guilty of, I am not afraid to be convicted of Slander: The Expence of a Shilling will procure from some short Hand Writer, a Copy of one of their Prayers, at some of their weekly Lectures in this Place where one would suppose there Men of best Sense did officiate ) and if this, when published, does not prove my Charge, to their Shame. and the Conviction of all indifferent Perfons, they shall have the Satisfaction, and I the Mortification, to hear my felf branded as a malicious Slanderer. But supposing the Allegation true, and that it can be proven, both which I am fully perswaded of; then, if to hearken to the Nonsense of another, be a Penance, which a Man of common Sense, who is his own Master, may well excuse himself from, I appeal to the Reader, whether one who is perswaded that their Addresses to Almighty God, are Nonfensical, and that Nonsense is displeasing to him, is not much less obliged to

offer up the Nonfense of another.

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Thus I think I have made such a large Induction of the Corruptions of their Worship, with Respect to the Matter of it, as will sufficiently excuse my Separation from them on that account; which will be further warranted, if we consider the Impersections of their extemporary Way, it being attended with such Disadvantages as will argue the Excellency, if not the Necessity of Forms, such as,

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Whoever has not the Vanity to think himself blest with the Gift of Prayer, is tempted to neglect it altogether, or if he shall be prevailed with once to essay it, when he finds that he cannot perform to any tole, rable Purpose, he is discouraged from any surther Attempt. And what is the necessary Consequence of this, but that the poor Man must continue in Ignorance and Irreligion; whereas a Liturgy provides him with all Necessarys, and renders him inexcuseable, if he does not employ them.

To this Purpose, allow me to add, that I have for a long time observed, that the stupid Ignorance, and that Height of Impiety, which is so much complain dof, and indeed obtains among the Generality of People, is in a great Measure owing to the want of Forms.

But suppose a Person grossy ignorant, shall be consident enough of his Ability to pray, and does actually adventure upon it, (which is a Case that very often happens) with how many

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( 157 many flat Impertinencies; with how much substantial Nonsence, and too often horrid Blasphemies may we reasonably conceive, will fuch a Performance be crowded? Nay, how many have some of us actually heard of this kind; and yet all this is unavoidable in the ex-

temporary way.

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For when the poor Man is exhorted to pray, he is at the same time discharg'd the use of all Helps, and is desir'd to depend only upon the Motion of the Spirit; and what is the Refult of this, but such a wretched one as I have hinted above? However, the poor Ignorant is not so much to be blam'd, who performs in the best Manner he can, as they who enjoin that Manner of Worship, who are certainly chargeable with whatever he utters amiss. So that the Matter is brought to this Issue, Either a Man may innocently address God, with impertinent, nonfenfical, and blafphemous Petitions, and expect to be heard when he does so (which I hope none are mad enough to think) or else he shall not pray at all, which is little better; or, last of all, he must be supply'd with some well digested Forms, and so much the better, if they be those of the Church.

But, to make the Case somewhat more favourable, suppose a Man, who is Master of a tollerable extemporary Faculty, is the Orator; yet even in that Case, before he begin, ye are under an Uncertainty whe-

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whether what he shall fay be right or wrong: This keeps the Spirit in Suspense; a State very unsuitable to that Intention requisite in Devotion: And even when he does pray, perhaps the third or fourth Petition ye hear, (especially if it be after Sermon) is dubious or unfound, which fo ever it be, ye cannot offer it up to God; and there is so much lost: Beside ye remit so much of your Devotion, by confidering whether the Petitions be found To which add, that while ye are thus confidering, he may have dispatched half a dozen Petitions e're ye can overtake him; and perhaps the next ye hear is flat or im-pertinent, which is so grating to the Soul of a Man of Sense, that it tempts him into a Passion very unfuitable in the Exercise of Prayer.

Let us put the most favourable Case that can be defired, viz. That there is nothing amiss in the Matter of the Prayer; yet even in that Case I wou'd have it considered, that God requires the utmost Seriousness and Intention in Prayer: There is also a considerable De-gree of Attention necessary to catch what drops from him who prays; but these are fuch Acts as very few are capable of; for they fo divide the Mind, that while a Man endeavours to grasp each, he loses both. And could I prefume to guess at others by my felf, I must declare, ( tho' my Genius and the course of my

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Studies have habituated me to some Application of Thought) that I cannot attend to both: So that I am asraid, I have too good Ground to think, that tho' the main Design of Christian Assemblies be to worship God, yet is this but the Work only of the Preacher, where extemporary Prayers are used, and that the People are no more concern'd in the Prayer, than in the Sermon, that is, they only hear both.

But, supposing extemporary Prayers were attended with none of these Disadvantages. there is one Confideration more, which I am to add, that plainly argues the Preference of the Liturgick way; which take in this Manner. Tis a Postulate which I hope none will deny That God ought to be worshipped in the best Manner possible; the Question then is, If that which a Man deliberates upon e're he speak, be preserable to what he utters at Random? Or, If that which severals and each of them, at least as wife as he, prepare to be faid, be better than that which any one prepares? I hope it will be granted, that the Preference is due to that which has been deliberated upon, and that by many. Put the Case then, that I could pray ex tempore to very good purpose, I am very sure that I cou'd compose a Prayer to much better purpose. then I ought to worship God with what is best, according to the Postulate, and if what I utter upon Deliberation be preserable to what is fooken

spoken without it, then certainly a Form of Worship, which always presupposes Fore thought is incomparably better than the extemporary Way, which requires little or none And if it be best to have the Prayer fram'd before I pronounce it, what is the Harm tho' I transcribe it from my Memory, nay, will I not be fo much the more fure of it if I do this; and if I may fafely write it, why not read it too? To which add, That if that Prayer which I form before hand, be better than that which I utter off hand, then certain. ly the Form prepar'd by the joint Endeavours of many, ( allowing each of them to be neither better nor wifer than my felf ) is by great Odds preferable to my fingle Endeavour? And if fo, then that Form which the Church has provided, has unspeakable Advantages above any one Man's Performance; it being the Result of the wifest Counsel, and most mature Deliberation; the Effect of the united Endeavours of Men Holy and Wife, who no doubt implored and obtained the Affiftance and Direction of the bleffed Spirit, in compiling a Form, which they were perswaded was the best and most acceptable Manner of WorshippingGod; otherwise they might have severally used their particular Gifts, which no modest or knowing Person will deny them to have been bleffed with as large a Measure of, as any of our later Pretenders: But so sen-

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fible were they of the Difadvantages of the extemporary Way, even in their own Experience: They observed moreover, that the Ignorant, that is, the Gros of Mankind, could not, and therefore did not pray at all; that the gifted Brethren and their Hearers too often mistook the warmth and quickness of the Fancie, and the readiness of Expression for the Dictates of the Spirit, which swelled the former with a high Conceit of them selves ( a frame of Mind of all others the most unsuitable in Devotion ) and made the later lie against the Holy Ghost: Besides, they found that this Liberty which Men were allowed, sometimes tempted them to vent their new and dangerous Notions, as the Inspirations of the Holy Ghost; and therefore the Church to assist the weakness of the one, and to check the vanity and Prefumption of the other, restricted both to the Use of Forms,

Nor is their Use, any thing new or singular, it being undeniably the Practice of all men in all Nations and Ages (if we shall only except of these who truly were, or salsly pretended to be inspired) to address the true God, or their supposed Deities, by certain Forms: a Demonstration, that 'tis most rational so to do; the universal Consent of Mankind, being an established Standard of Things: It is particularly allowed of as a convincing Argument for the Existence of a Deity; and

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therefore why may it not as well determine w with Respect to the Manner of his Worship

Nor do Men only, thus universally con fpire to affert the Preference of Forms; Heaven has likewife declared the same. For we find, that the Jews, the peculiar People of God worshipped him by Forms: For what else are the greatest Part of the Pfalms, but Forms of Prayer and Praises, which were composed for, and used in the Service of the Temple. Now, if Set Forms were as unlawful as our Adverfaries alledge, would inspired Persons have dictated them, or the Prophets have fuffered them to be used; or if they had discharged their Use, would they not have left some Intimation about it in their Writings? And yet there is not a Title to this purpose in these facred Books.

cann Nay, fo fully perswaded were the Jews, of the lawfulness of Forms, that besides these inspired bines, they composed many others, which they who are Curious may confult in the Original Hebrew, or as they are translated into the more known Languages. These Forms were used in the Synagogue, where our Lord was so often present; so that, if he had judged them unlawful, he would have declared against them, as we find he did against the other Corruptions of the Jewish Church; and we might the rather expect fuch a Declaration upon Record, to prevent our being tempted

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empted to think, that his presence in the Synagogue, did import his Approbation of he Forms that were used there. No doubt then, if our bleffed Lord had been as much an Enemy to Forms as our Presbyterians are; and if they shall allow him to be but as zealous s themselves, we would have found them as expresly condemned in the Gospel as in the Ads of the General Assembly. This Prefumption of our Lord's Approbation of the use of Forms, is heightned to a Certainty, when it is confidered that he prescribed one himself, St. Matth. 6. 9. After this manner pray ye, Our red Father, &c. And St. Luke 11. 2. When ye pray led say, Our Father, &c. Now that these Words, After this manner pray ye, and when ye pray say, contain an Injunction to use what follows, Our Father, &c. whether as a Pattern or Form. cannot be denyed, they being conceived in as express and peremptory Terms as any Command in the Bible; and that it is not temporary or binding only upon the Apolles, but does likewise oblige us, is plain, seeing all divine Commands are still binding until they be cancelled by divine Countermands, which we do not find to have happened in this Case. Well, one thing is certain, that we are commanded to use this Prayer, the Question then is, whether as a Pattern only, or as a Form

also? Now, that it is a formal Prayer, or which is the same, a Form of Prayer, is hence evident. X 2

evident, because it is conceived in the same Manner as other Prayers, that is, with Invo. cation, Petitions, Doxology, and concluding Amen; so that it may be offeredup to God,in the very Terms and Order in which it is narrated in the Gospel. In a word, we are expressy commanded to fay, Our Father, &c. but it is Nonfense to command us to say a Pattern, there. fore we are to use it as a Form. This was the Sense and Practice of the Catholick Church in this Matter: But why should I add more, our Adversaries themselves, in their Directory and Catechisms acknowledge, that it is a Form, and that as such it may, and ought to be used. If then the Lords Prayer be a Form, which when we pray we are commanded to use; and if the Presbyterians totally neglect to use it as such, I appeal to the Reader, whether they are not chargeable with an impious and fundamental Omission; and in Consequence, whether all who would not be involved in the Guilt, or run the Hazard of offering up an unacceptable, because an imperfect Worship, should not separate from them?

But I further add, Our Lord has prescribed a Form, therefore Set Forms are not only lawful, but preferable to the extemporary way. The first Part of this Consequence is demonstrated, if that is allowed to be lawful which Christ has commanded, and which his Followers, by vertue of his Com-

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mand, are obliged to practife to the end of the World: And the Truth of the other Part thus appears, It is univerfally agreed upon, that we should offer up our Addresses to Heaven in a more particular and explicite Manner, than is done in the Lords Prayer: The Question then is, whether these shall be presented in the formal or extemporary Way. Now, that which, argues the preference of the Former ( to pass same other Considerations) is, that the there is no express Scripture Precept enjoining the extemporary, or difcharging the Liturgick Way, fo that thus far both are equal; yet is there a Precedent for the one ( our Lord having prescribed a Form ) which cannot justly be alledged in behalf of the other, as shall be proven hereafter. I ap. peal then to the Reader, whether it may not be reasonably presumed, That to worship God by Forms, is more agreeable to the Mind of Christ (he having afforded us a lasting Precedent ) than to do it in the extemporary Way. for which there is neither Precept nor warrantable Example in the Scripture?

And this Presumption is heightned, if we consider, that our Lord's prescribing the perpetual Use of a Form, might tempt the most rational Christians to think that it is a Precedent warranting the use of other Forms; to which Temptation He would never have given Occasion, had he meant that it was no such

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Precedent: He would on the contrary have declared as plainly, as the Presbyterians would have done in this Case, that it was no Warrant for the use of other Forms; which yet we do not find he has done; and therefore I conclude, that he designed his Church should use Forms.

This I am fure the Catholick Church, in the fucceeding Ages, understood to be the Sense of our Lord; certain stated Forms being then univerfally used in the most solemn Administrations: And it may well be presumed, that they who lived so 'near his Days, were better acquainted with the Mind of Christ, than they who are removed at the D ft ince of 1600 Years. Thus the Church in the following Centuries continued also to use Forms; and the in that long Decurse of Years, which preceeded the Reformation, many Corruptions were introduced into the publick Liturgies, which wanted to be reformed; yet did not these extraordinary Men, who removed their Corruptions, ever once dream of removing, but still continued the Forms themselves, or exchanged them for others more fuitable to their Circumstances: Nay, so universally did the use of Forms obtain after the Reformation, that I believe I may challenge our Adversaries to name one Church or Society of the Reformed, which did not use them in their publick Worship, except some mad Anabaptists in Germany and elfe( 167 )

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elsewhere. This was, and still is the practice of all the Lutheran Churches; the same holds true concerning those of Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia; and not to mention here that such has ever been the Practice of the renowned Church of England, the greatest Glory, and strongest Bulwark of the Reformation: I alledge, that publick Forms were, and yet are in use, in the (supposed purer) Calvinist Churches in Germany, the Netherlands and France; nay, in the still purer Church of Geneva; And which is yet more to the purpose, our Adversaries cannnot deny, that the purest of all, the Kirk of Scotland, allowed of publick Forms, Knox having composed a Liruegy for its Use, upon the Model of that of Geneva, of which there are still so many Copies preserved, that all who are curious may easily consult it.

Nor was the Use of Forms altogether difused in this Nation, until a Set of Enthusiastick Rebels became impudent enough to pretend to such uncommon Measures of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, as in their Opinion did render Forms not only needless but a Burthen.

But how ill grounded these Pretences were, is hence evident, because the very same Spirit which inspired their Prayers, did likewise inspired them to cashier the Lords Prayer, to strike off the Heads of the Lords anointed and his High Priest. In a word, to commit such Villagies.

Villanies, and to occasion such Disorders, as were never before known in Britain; and fuch perhaps as had never been perpetrated by any called Christians; so that if these hornid Works of Darknels were not the Fruits of the Spirit, neither were their Prayers; the same Spirit having equally animated them to both I shall only add, That God seems to have permitted thefe Mischiefs, that Men might be effectually convinced, that He did as little ap. prove of their Innovation in his Worlhip, as all the reasonable World will acknowledge he did of their other wicked Practices.

So that upon a Review of the whole, I think I may conclude, that if the many and great Difadvantages of the Extemporary, and Advantages of the Liturgick Way; if the Example of our Lord, who approved of the Jewish Forms, and who himself prescribed one, which is a laftingPattern and Precedent for composing other Forms; if the Practice of the primitive Christians, who best knew the Mind of Christ in this Matter, and of the Church in succeeding Ages, which best knew their Minds; if the Example of the Reformers, who removed their Abuses, but Aill continued to use the Forms; if the Practice of the admired Predecessors of our Presbyterians, who still made use of Forms, till the same Spirit which prompted them to reject them, and infpired their extemporary Prayers, did likewife animate them

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to commit these Villanies which so justly render them the Objects of all Mens Abhorrence. who are Lovers of Peace and Truth. If all these, I say, will determine not only the Preference, but the Necessity of the Liturgick Way, then was it both lawful and necessary. that I should separate from the Presbyterian Party, whose Worship is so corrupt with Respect to the Matter, and so impersect with Respect to the Manner; and that I should embrace the Communion of that Church, whose Worship is the best in the World, with Respect to both; it being neither so defective as the Liturgies of the other Reformed Churches, nor so redundant as those of Rome and Greece. it being in the Main, formed upon the Model of the ancient Liturgies, with such Alterations and Additions only, as their different Circum, stances made necessary; or, which the Church (if it have any Power to determine in Matters indifferent, which it must have, if it have any Power at all ) might lawfully impole; and which all its Sons, if they are not too weak or wilful, should, and will allow of

But I am not at present so much concerned to prove the Preserence of any particular Lieurgy, as to affert the Excellency, if not the Necessity, of Set Forms in General; and therefore I proceed to answer the chief Objection which has been urged against the Use of any such Forms, viz. That they stint the Spirit,

120 ( 170 )

To which I answer, That this Objection sup. poseth ( what will not be easily granted, nor they be able to prove ) that the Spirit of God does dictate the Substance and Manner of Prayer. This is a Gift which I do not find enumerated, I Cor. 12. among the other extraordinary Gifts which were bestowed upon the Church at Pentecost: But allowing that fuch a Gift had been then vouchsafed, must it not have been withdrawn with the other special Donatives of the Holy Ghost? But if any shall pretend, that it still continued with them. they must suffer us to suspect them, till they afford us the same Proofs of their Inspiration, which the Orators of the Apostolick Age gave of theirs. + e16 ( 1119)

That fo much urged Passage, Rom. 8. 26. Likewise the Spirit belpeth our Infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it self maketh Intercession for us, with Groanings that cannot be uttered. This Passage, I say, is no Foundation for their Pretence to the Spirit; for who will deny, that weknow not what to pray for as we sught, or that the Spirit helpeth our Infirmities, whether in the Liturgick, or extempore Way: And if the Spirit helpeth our Infirmities, it is supposed that we do something our selves, and that whatever is wanting to make our Prayers acceptable, that, and that only the Spirit supplies. Now, that the Spirit does not furnish the

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Matter or Words of our Prayers, appears from the very Text, where we are told, that the Assistance which it assords, is its Intercession, which is not made in Words, but with groanings that cannot be uttered. Thus you see this Text is so far from serving their Purpose, that it rather proves against them; seeing it plainly supposeth that Men use their Endeavours: Now what Endeavours can they use, but to prepare the Matter, to reduce it to a Form, and to carry along with them as much Fervency and Sincerity as they can, and then the Holy Ghost does in an inestable Manner interceed for the

Acceptance of the whole?

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The Reason of Things does also prove, that thus it must be: For is it not in the Use of the ordinary Means, that we are Now to expect the Assistance of the blessed Spirit; but where, or what are these Means, if our Prayers be immediately inspired? In that Case, the Holy Ghost does all, and our Prayers ( if fuch they may be called, which were never conceived by us ) are as extraordinary as any thing was poured forth upon the Day of Pentecoft, and, as such, should not be suffered to evanish into Air how foon they are uttered, but ought to be registrated among the other infallible Dictates of the Spirit. But if this is too much to be pretended to, after the uncommon Influences are so certainly withdrawn, that the Presbyterians can give no better Documents of their

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Inspiration, than any who should pretend to a quite contrary Inspiration; or, if you will, than the modern Prophers, that is, their own bare and impudent Allegation: then all the Assistance we are to expect from the Spirit, is in the use of the Means: that is, upon our preparing the Matter, &c. the Spirit will bless our Endeavours, and plead with God for his Ac-

ceptance of our Prayers.

But allowing that the Holy Gooff did immediately dictate Prayers, what Title have the Presbyterians to its Influences, which are confined to the Church, from whose Communion they have departed? And tho' I fhould not urge this Confideration, which by the by could be form'd into a Demonstration, yet I hope it will be granted, that the Church ( with whom Christ has promised to continue his Spirit to the End of the World ) can plead a better Title to these Influences, than any fingle Teacher among them, to whom no such Promise is made. Nay, supposing the Presbyterians, as Schismaticks, not uncapable of its Motions, and that their private Orators might expect its Inspiration; , yet that their Prayers are not the Dictates of the Spirit, is evident from what I have hinted above, viz. That their Addresses to Heaven, too often confift of Petitions that are fo dubious, falle, &c. hat were they published, the very Authors wou'd be ashamed of them. How hen can they, without the most horrid

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Impiety be ascribed to the unerring Spirit of God.

This, I think, is sufficient to disprove the Pretences of our Adversaries: But, will they readily alledge, This is not enough to vindicate the Use of Forms, which ( according to them) stints the free Spirit of God? Then I further answer, That this Assertion is too bold, if it be understood in its utmost Latitude, and without Exception; feeing thence it would follow. That our Lord stinted the Spirit by prescribing a Form, and that all who are obliged to use it by vertue of his Command, do the fame; that the Spirit was restrained, when in his Agony he repeated thrice the same Prayer, That the Apostles did the like, seeing they frequently used the same Form of blessing; that the Church Catholick, and our admired Reformers were thus guilty; nay, that the Presbyterians themselves are not altogether blameless, seeing they always difmiss their Congregations with the Apostolical Benediction, and praise God by certain Forms, when it is undeniable that the Spirit can as freely dictate Praises as Prayers, and Metre as well as Profe.

But I would know of our Adversaries, what they understand by stinting the Spirit? If their meaning be. That it is restrained, with Respect to the Matter, that is, That necessary Petitions are omitted, which the Spirit would

suggested, were it not stinted by our Forms Then I would have the Reader to confider that if the Lords Prayer, the Creed, and Deca logue, are a Standard, according to which we should form our Requests; I think I may challenge them to mention a necessary Peris tion which the Liturgy wants: And tho' they could name one or more, yet does the Use of the Lords Prayer, which is a comprehensive Form, supply the Defect, which is more than they can alledge in behalf of their extempore Performances; feeing they not only neglect to use the Lords Prayer as a Form, but likewise omit to pray in Terms equivalent to that particular Petition of it, Forgive us our Trespasses, &c. which they are necessarly obliged to use, allowing it only to be a Pattern; which, by the by, is a Demonstration that the Spirit of God does not dictate their Prayers, who neglect a Petition, which the Son of God has so expresly enjoined. I would have it also considered, that if the preparing the Substance of a Prayer does flint the Spirit, then are they who are obliged to follow the Westminster Directory, no less guilty than they who use the Liturgy of the Church of England.

Heap of Matter into a certain Form, does stint the Spirit, they suppose that the Spirit only should work it into Form, which is to assign him a very mean Office; an Office which an indif-

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If thus our Prayers are not dictated by the pirit, either as to Matter or Form, why may we not prepare the Matter, and digest it into Form? And if our Requests for Things nereffary must always be the same, why may we not offer them up in the same Terms? Do hey think that the changing the Phrases, and transposing the Petitions does constitute the Spirit of Prayer, or that this makes out Addresses the more acceptable to God? No, it may well tickle the Fancy, and possess the Orator with too good an Opinion of the Quickness of his Invention, and the Eluency of his Expression, and perhaps cheat the credulous People into a Perswasion of his being inspired; but this is so far from rendering his Prayers the more acceptable, that it may justly provoke God to reject them; at least it is much more probable, that a Man who for fear of offending God, dare not adventure into his Presence without a well digested Form, is a more welcome Supplicant, than he who appears rashly before him, without once confidering what he is to ask, or in what manner, and therefore unavoidably addresses him with the undigested Conceits of his own Noddles And may not the former upon better Grounds expect the Aid of the Spirit in the reverent and devout Use of Means, than the other who

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who uses none at all, and who perhaps thinks himself too perfect to need them. But after all, in the name of Goodness, why do these Men raise such a hideous Clamour against the Use of Forms, and condemn the Formalists as impious Wretches who six Bounds to the free Spirit of God; when all publick Prayers are unavoidably Forms, and consequently our Adversaries are as Guilty as those whom they are pleased to reckon most Criminal

For seeing their Prayers are in Substance still the same; and that it is not possible to cloath the same Petition with a new Phrase upon every Occasion, (when half a Dozen various Phrases will exhaust the Stock of the most copious of their Ocators) must they not then, after having expended their Stock, either necessarily fall into the constant Use of the most significant of these Phrases, or else run them over in a perpetual Circle, which at best makes these Prayers but so many different Forms?

But, supposing the extempere Orators freighted with a fresh Cargo of Phrases, for every Occasion, are not their Prayers as much Forms to their Congeregations, and do not they as much stint the Spirit with Respect to these, as any Liturgy in the World? So that the whole Debate resolves at last in this, seeing the Use of Forms are unavoidable in the Wor-

( 177 Worship of God, whether it is not much more reasonable that the Church should impose its well digested Forms, than any private Person or Pastor his extemporary Effusions, and so much the rather, not to mention other Confiderations) that, if during the extraordinary Dispensation of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of the Prophets was Subject to the Prophets, why ought not the private Spirit of every Member (after that Dispensation has ceased) be subject to, and determined by the publick Spirit of the Church?

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Thus, I think, I have sufficiently disproved the Presbyterian Worship, both as to its Matter and Manner: I have also afferted the Excellency of stated Forms, and overturned the strongest Objection against them; but before I conclude this Head, I must add, That their Sacram Doctrine concerning the Sacraments, and their Manner of dispensing these most solemn Institutions of the Goffel, did yet more fully convince me of the Lawfulness, if not the Necesfity of separating from them, which will thus briefly appears a synoptical warm (c. 10) in

That Children are tainted with Original Sin, Original which makes them liable to Damnation, is Sinwith them an Arricle of Faith; and that God; who after repeated Provocations, continues to offer Pardon and Grace to the Parents, communicate both to their Children, who have no other Sin, but what they have derived

questioned by any who have just Apprehensions

of the divine Mercy and Goodness; and who consider that he is no respecter of Persons, but rather that his Ways are infinitely equal; fo that, at least, Children have as good a Title to Mercy and Grace as their Parents. If then these are conveyed to Parents in an ordinary way, God has, no doubt, appointed fome Mean by which they shall be ordinarly communicated to Children. This Mean is universally allowed to be Baptism, If then Baptism may be dispensed to Children, which is not denyed; and if the inward Grace does always accompany the outward Mean, when it encounters with no Renitency in the Recipient, which ought as little to be doubted: Otherwise to what purpose has God commanded the Mean to be administred; if his saving Grace does not attend it? If thus, Children are liable to Damnation, because of Sin, and if God has provided a Mean by which that Pardon and Grace may be conveyed, which may prevent their Ruin, Why do the Presbyterians teach, that Baptism is of no Efficacy, seeing, notwithstanding it, they may be damned; and in consequence of this Doctrine, too often cruelly fuffer wretched Children to Die without it, than which nothing can be more op-

fays, John 3. 5. Except a Man be born of Wa-

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ter and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdam of God. That by being born of Water, Baptism is meant, will not, I think, be denyed; that this Baptism of Water and of the Spirit is necessary to Salvation, will as little be disputed, seeing the Text does expresty declare, that without it no Man can enter into the Kingdom of God; of which the obvious Convertion is, That they who are thus Baptized thall enter there. If it be faid. That it is not the Baptism of Water, but only that of the Spirit, which entitles to Heaven, and faves from Hell, I answer, That they are not separated in the Text, fo that both are necesfary, the one as the Vehicle which conveys the other. The one is necessary, not as if the very Act of Baptism did by a physical Efficiency work Grace, but as it is a Mean upon the due Administration of which, God will communicate his faving Grace; fo that, if without Grace none can be faved, and if without Baptism, which is a necessary Mean, it cannot be conveyed to Children in an ordinary Way; and if it be prefumptuous and dangerous to hope for it extraordinarly, especially when there is an ordinary Mean appointed, then is Baptism with Water indispensably necessary, feeing without it none can reasonably expect to be baptized with the Spirit, or that they shall enter into the Kingdom of God.

Nor is their Principle and Practice in this Cale less contrary to the Faith and Practice of

the Church in the first and purest Ages: In so far, that I do not remember so much as one Heretick, who believed, and deliberately practified, as they too often do in this Matter; nor any ever called Christian, except Julian the Apostate, concerning whom Cyril of Alexandria reports, that he used to ridicule the Christians, who maintained that Baptism did sanctify reckoning it a Thing impossible that Water should wash the Soul.

Their Practice is likewise contrary to their own Principles, for they believe that all the Eled Children will be faved but without Grace they cannot be faved; and this Grace cannot reasonably be expected, but in the Use of the ordinary Mean, which is Baptilm. Why then do they, notwithstanding the positive Inflithtion of Baptism, and in Opposition to an express Text of Scripture, to the Practice of the Catholick Church, and their own Principles. Suffer little Children, ( of whom is the Kingdom of Heaven ) to die unbaptized ? Especially considering, that, for any thing they know, they may be of the Number of the Elect. to whom at least Baptilm is a necessary Mean of Salvation. And yet so much more necessary are Preachments in the reckoning of these People, that they will not dispense it in case of Necessity, but ontheir Lecture Days: Or, if they be prevailed upon to administer it privately (which is a Favour granted only to a few that are Rich and Great ) yet will they hardly interrupt the imのでは、日本の日本

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impertinent Lecture to fave the expiring Child.

Now ho then can be of that Communion, where his helpless Children may be deprived of the ordinary Mean of Salvation, and they cruelly fuffered to Die, that is, if God's extraordinary Mercy does not interpose (which by the

by, is a Secret, concerning which we can affirm nothing certainly ) to be damned with-

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But supposing their Administration valid, and that they are willing to baptize; yet such have they made the Terms of the Baptismal Covenant, that no other Society of Christians ever required the like; Forms, many of which are Dubious, and some Impious and False, of which I have given some Instances already, and might have alledged many more from their Confession of Faith, which is the Creed into which they baptize.

Nor is this all, for if my Parish Teacher or the Administrator should chance to be a genuine Presbyterian, he would prove the Obligation of the Solemn League and Covenant upon me, and Solemn press it as another necessary Condition of the League Child's Admission to Baptism, tho' it be in my 151. Opinion a treasonable, and most wicked Combination. And yet so rigidly are these Terms of Communion imposed, that a Man must either submit to them, or separate from those who injoin them. And therefore, seeing I could not in Conscience do the one, I cheerfully did the other.

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And tho' the other Sacrament be one of the most solemn Institutions of the Gospel, an Ordinance which feals the Pardon of their Sins, and conveys new Supplies of Grace to fuch as are duly disposed; a Sacrament which the venerable Ancients did celebrate once ever Day, when their Zeal was most fervent; which they celebrated every Lords Day, when it was a little abated; and which the Church, when most degenerated did celebrate at least twice or thrice in the Year; And yet in the Presbyterian Communion, my Lot might fall in a Place, where the Holy Eucharist would not be administred once in a Dozen of Years: And even when Shame or Importunity has determined the Teacher to intimate its Celebration, the Convocation has more of the Confusion of a Fair, than of the Order and Decency of a religious Assembly. And how can it otherwise be, when they not only allow, but encourage, on these Occasions, such Rendevouzes of the promiscuous Rabble, who desert their own Churches, to the great Hindrance of their Devotion who communicate, and Scandal too, when they see fo many professed Christians neglect their Lords express Command of keeping up the Memorial of his Death and Passion for them: an Omission so scandalous, that such would in the primitive Ages be expelled the Congregation, with Persons openly Scandalous and Excommunicated. But the Mystery of the PresbyC 183 )

Presbyterian Practice, or the Reason why it is different from that of the Ancients, is, that they endeavoured to perfwade Non-Communicants of the Sacredness of the Eucharist, of the Necessity of partaking of it, and of reforming their Manners in order thereto; whereas the Presbyterians give us good Ground to suspect, that they too much mean to express their Regard for, and shew their Interest with the Mobb, who in Return contribute all they can

to the Religious Parade.

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supposing the Sacrament administred frequently and decently, that is, without thefe groffer Indecencies; yet if I am one of thefe, who in the least favour the Hierarchy and Li turgy of the Church of England, I am denyed the Sacrament, and Excommunicated with the Blasphemers and Adulterers. Nay. should I only offer to receive it after that Manner which I thought most Decent, and knew to be most expressive of my inward Devothey would discharge that Posture as Idolatrous, and debar me from it; while I, who best knew the Intentions of my own Heart, was ready to attest the Searcher of Hearts, that my Adoration was only directed to the one True and living God, and his Son Jesus Christ, who is exalted at his Father's right Hand.

But, put the Case, that either they should dispense with me, or that my Scruples about these

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these Particulars, were removed; and even allowing them to be endued with full Au. thority to administer; yet how could I ever be prevailed upon to mock God, or cheat my felf so much as to receive that as a Sacrament, which indeed is no fuch thing : which I thus prove. In every Sacrament, there is the Form as well as the Matter, and it is by Vertue of the Form, that the Matter becomes Sacramental: Now the Form in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper are the same Words by which our Lor'd did at first constitute the Sacrament, viz. Take, Eat, this is my Body, do this in Remembrance of me. And drink ye of this Cup, for this is my Blood: do this, as oft as ye drink it in Remembrance of Me; which, if they be at all, ought to be used in that Prayer, by which they intend to confecrate the Elements; but there they are never once mentioned: And too often there is nothing equivalent to supply the Defeat.

To what purpose then, should I continue with a Party, whose Teachers have no Authority to dispense the Sacraments, these solemn Institutions of our holy Religion, the proper Badges of our Christian Profession, and the appointed Means by which Pardon and Grace are sealed and applyed? a Party whose pretended Pastors employ the Power which they think they have, so awkwardly and unfrequently, that I, or some dear to me, might happen to Die

185 Die, without once partaking of these Means of Salvation; and the Providence should la-

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your me or mine with an Opportunity to receive the Sagraments, yet to parrow and linful are their Terms of Communion, that must either counter-act the clearest Dictates of my Confcience, or separate from them who will not dispense them but on such Conditions. To which I was the more easily determined. because their Administration, particularly of the Sacrament of the Lards Supper, is in Truth a vain and empty Pageantry, there being no due Application of the Form to the Matter and confequently no Sacrament constituted by them.

Thus I have advanced such Reasons to ex cuse my Separation, as may in all Conscience fatisfy all who are not too much prejudiced against the Truth, or me. But there is yet another Argument founded upon my Observation of the Spirit of the Party, which, as it gave the first Occasion to my dislike of them, to a further Acquaintance with it, convinced me; that I should not continue among them. This is a Topick, which, if profecuted as it deferves might serve in stead of all these I have urged, and would discover more of the Depth of that Mystery, and give the World juster Notions of the Party, than all the Volumes that have been written against them.

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But I have (I'm affraid) so wearied the Reader already, that I must at present contract my Thoughts upon this Head, which I at first intended, and may hereaster (if God will)

prosecute at large.

In the mean time, by the Spirit of a Party I understand these peculiar Dispositions, which their Principles, Humours, &c. form in a Society of Men; which discover themselves in the general Course of their Actions, and by which they are plainly distinguished from all others. Thus the ancient Philosophical Sects eminently distinguished themselves: The Platonick Spirit differed widely from the Stoical, as the Sceptical did from the Dogmatick, and fo furth of the rest. The Pagan Spirit in general exerted it self after another Manner than did the Christian, and the Spirit of the several Sects of Christians did no less differ from one another, than they all differ d from that? Spirit which animated the Church. The Spirit of the Church of Rome, is not the same with that of Protestants; and the many Subdivisions of Protestants, bewray too much the Difference of their feveral Spirits.

I must indeed own, that considering the various Circumstances of Men, 'tis hardly to be imagined that there shall not be some Difference in the frame of their Minds. However, some may chance to be so much of a Kidney, that they naturally, and perhaps

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187 without any Defign, form themselves into a Party. This Union of Minds, when there is no other Relation betwixt them, becomes to them a Demonstration of the Truth of their Principles, and they'll be ready to ascribe it to the Influences of Heaven. It obliges them to conceive favourably of themselves, and badly of all who differ from them; it suffers them to fix no other Standard of Truth or Falshood, Good or Evil, of a Principle or Caufe, but the groundless Berswasion, or Prejudice rather, which they entertain in favour of the common Principle which unites them: And by whatever Action their common Spirit exerts it felf. that they consecrate, because it is the natural Refult of their Principles, and tends to the Advantage of the common Cause; without once confidering whether it be otherwise good or evil. Their little Specialities don't suffer them to entertain extended Notions of Mankind, and the Nature of Things; or to confider the general Laws, which right Reason prescribes to regulate their Conduct; being rather driven by an impetus, of which they can give no reasonable Account. And this is what I call the Spirit of a Party; a Spirit by which too many called Christians are acted; a Spirit (however contrary it be to the Spirit of the Gospel by which the Presbyterians distinguish themselves: Which I shall endeavour to prove, after having observed in general; That

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the our bleffed Lord, when he established his Church, did distinguish it from all the other Societies on Earth, He did not act with the Partiality which is the Characteristick of the Party men. For he adopted into his divine Institution, these Principles which were univerfally agreed upon among Men, and the Specialities which he added, were recommended by Credentials that might fatisfy the most Sceptical Minds. He broke down the Partition Wall, which excluded the Gentiles from the Priviledges of the Peculium; and admitted both 7em and Gentile into it, upon these sew and easie Terms; To repent of the Practices, which they knew were contrary to the Laws which themselves approved of; To believe in Him, who had wrought Miracles to remove their Infidelity; To be initiated into his Society by a Ceremony which was in Use among themfelves; To be confirmed and strengthned in the Faith by another fignificant Ceremony; To worship God according to the admirable Form which He prescribed; And to submit to the Authority of his Church, with whom he promised to continue his Spirit to the End of the World. And as his Terms of Communion, were truly Catholick; so his Views were not narrow and contracted, nor framed in Order to ferve the Interests of a Party. His Spirit was, on the contrary, generous, great, and Divine; and the Actions by which it dif-

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govered it felf, were fuch as were beneficial to Mankind as well to those who did as those who did not believe in him; as well to those who perfecuted, as those who adored him. Such was the Spirit of our Lord, and fuch is the Spirit which has always animated the true Church. Let us next examine, whether the Presbyterian Spirit be of the same kind. They pretend that it is, That uncommon Measures of it are still necessary in the work of Conversion. and that many of their Number are vouchfafed the fame. What this Conversion is. and how the Spirit operates in order thereto, none can be ignorant of, who have given themselves the Trouble to peruse their practical Systems, such as, Shepherd's Sincere Convert, Guthrie's Saving Interest in Christ, &c. Take these few hints of this Matter, according to them. However regular the Lives of Christians may have been, and whatever their Endeavours to please God, yet are their best Actions but so many splendid Sins, and they themselves still Children Wrath, until God does all of a sudden, and in an irrefistible Manner influence them by his Spirit. Upon this extraordinary Operation, their Souls, and commonly their Bodies too, are in the greatest disorder; they who were formerly of equal Tempers, and of a piece with their fellow Christians, look like People of another World: At first gloomy Melancholy dwells in their Countenances, and perhaps Posses-

possesses their Souls, and then a faint Ray dif. plays it felf: Now they are funk in the Abyss of Hell, and next Minute climb up to the third Heaven : Sometimes they are upon the brink of Despair, and at other times they conclude that all is well with them, to use their own Cant. They continue under these Agitations, till either Despair forces them to do Execution upon themselves; or till their Hopes chance so far to overcome their Fears, that they think they feel the Darkness gradually diffipating, and fee the Sun of Righteoufnels beginning to appear; they feel the firugglings of the Babe of Grace, in the place of the bringing furth of Children ( a Passage of the Prophet impertmently, applyed by them to this purpose) and they can tell you the critical Minute when they were delivered. Then the ordinary Assistance and Direction of the Spirit are too low for Men of their Elevation; they pretend to no less than Illuminations and Raptures and sometimes to the most extraordihary Inspirations; they are as fully perswaded that they are in the Right, as if they faw all things in their Archetypal Forms, and are as fure of Heaven as if they had read their Names in the Book of Life.

This is what they call the Work of Regeneugraceration and the State of Grace, which they say 200 is so necessary, that without being thus converted, none can be saved; and yet so sew are

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ror they to whom they allow this faving Grace. that, if we shall except the Apostles, and those of that extraordinary Age, and St. Augustin, they'll allow none to have been bleffed with it. fill it was vouchfased to some Presbyterians in the West of Scotland, about a hundred Years who conveyed it to their Successors: and infected some of their English Brethren therewith. Some of them have expresty affirmed, that a Member of the Church of England is uncapable of it, as it is too great a favour to be bestowed even upon the Herd of their own Party, God having only determined thefe by his common Grace to a liking of the good Cause, that their Numbers might terrify Magistrates to favour them, and that they might overaw the ungodly. Thus the Gift of the Holy Ghost is the distinguishing Priviledge of the Adepts in that Way; as it is the Depth of the Mystery of that Party. It is their πρώτον ψευδο; That which keeps them in Countenance, and supports them against all the Affaults of Scripture and Reason : For to what purpose is it to adduce either against them, who think they have the Spirit, which is above Reason, and is the infallible Interpreter of Scripture. So that the disproving this Conceit, might prove of the highest use to themselves, who build their Hopes of Heaven upon so fandy a Foundation; to their Follow, ers, who are so wretchedly gulled by them;

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and to the World, to whom it makes Them a Plague, who might otherwise approve them selves regular Christians, loyal Subjects, and

good Neighbours.

Some think that all this is vile Hype crify and Pretence. I shall not deny; that this may be the Case of too many; yet there are not a few, who, I am perswaded, are pasfive of fome uncommon Motions, which they mistake for the Inspirations of the Holy Ghost. I have known some of this Kind, who have been hardned in their Errors, and did conceive the deepest Prejudices against them (and for their fake against their Cause), who called that Hypocrify which they sensibly felt. A more folld way, in my Opinion, of exposing their Vanity in this Respect, is by urging, that these Motions (if there be nothing else by which to distinguish them ) they feel in common with those whom they will not allow to be inspired. For many of the Pagan Priests and Priestesses felt such Enthusiasms; many of the ancient Schismaticks and Hereticks felt the like. The Church of Rome has not wanted its Fanaticks. The German Anabaptists were not all Hypocrites; and the Quakers and Camifars are as certainly passive of such Motions as the Presbyterians themselves. The Question then is, how they shall distinguish their Agitations from the Enthufiasms of those whom they so much condemn. Miracles they do not prethe all paf

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pretend to; and if they are willing to have their Spirit tried by the Scriptures, then will all the other Enthufiasts and the Catholick Church pass Sentence against them. They'll tell them that the Scriptures and their Spirit contradict one another, which were impossible, did the Holy Ghost inspire both. The Church will further alledge, that the uncommon Influences of the Spirit were withdrawn many Centuries ago, when the extraordinary Purposes for which they were vouchsafed, were sufficiently served; and that the Conversions of St. Paul, &c. are attended with Circumstances too fingular to be drawn into a Precedent by any other, especially where Christianity has been so long professed. But if they shall complain of the Injustice of such a Sentence, and sustain themselves Judges in their own Cause, the Sentence will certainly be favourable ( when they are both Judge and Party ) tho probably it will not be conclusive. For when they try their Spirit by the Scriptures, they pass Sentence according to the Sense which that very Spirit dictates; and so commit a Circle, or prove the same Thing by the very same, which is no concluding Proof in Logick, and will fatisfy none but fuch as are resolved to believe without any Proof at all.

But will the Godly perhaps say, These are only the carnal Reasonings of a Reprobate, who never felt the Workings of God's Spirit upon his

Bb

his own Soul; but his Logick shall never perswade us, that we do not feel what we are fo sensible of. This is the best Plea that can be offered for them, and yet it is in Truth a wretched one. For tho' I my felf was never disturbed with these irregular Motions, I do not deny that others may have felt them: Nay, I own, that I have known Presbyterians under Exercise ( as they call it ) as well as feen fome of the modern Prophets under their Agitations. But I deny (and dety them to prove) that either are the Effects of divine Impres. fions. Extraordinary Documents they cannot vouch, nor do the Scriptures serve their Purpose; And if a confident Affirmation founded upon an inward Perswasion, may challenge our Affent, we are as much obliged to believe the Prophets, as the Presbyterians, both being equally peremptory, and, for any thing known to us, upon equal Grounds. The one feel these uncommon Commotions, and ascribe them to the Influences of the Holy Ghost, as well as the other; and yet, say the Presbyterians, these Prophets are under a powerful Delusion: And why may not others suspect that they are under the like, when, in this Respect, they cannot distinguish themselves from these Enthusiasts, to the Satisfaction of any indifferent Person? This may reasonably check their Confidence, and make them suspect that they themselves are likewise mistaken in ascribing that to a divine

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195 divine Efficiency, which can be otherwise accounted for. For such is the natural Constitution of fome Persons, that their Imaginations are eafily impressed, and their Passions soon moved. When the Fancy is strong, the Impression is in Proportion deep; and when the Passions are keen, so much the more violent is their Hurry. When a Person of this Constitution is surprised by some uncommon Accident, the rational Faculties are instantly byassed by the prevailing mechanical Powers, and the Patient is driven by a forcible Impetus to commit Extravagancies in Proportion to the Heat of his Brain, and the Motion of his Animal Spirits; while it is not easie to convince him, that he is not absolutely in the Right; his Reason being so captivated by his Fancy and Passions, that it cannot be attacked; and these again so agreeably affected, even with his Follies, that it is perhaps impossible to undeceive him; which is precisely the Case of our pretended Inspirato's, who are People of a stronger Fancy than Judgement, and whose Passions stretch farther than their Reason. And as all men naturally have their. particular Byass, so these have more or less of a hidden Spice of Devotion in their Tempers. Now, when upon the Commission of some grievous Sin, or the hearing of some passionate Harangue, this is awakened, the Fancy of a Person of this Temper, is affected with horrible Apprehensions, and his

Passions take the Alarm, which so improves u-

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pon his devotional Melancholy, that he is almost distracted: He dreams of nothing but of Hell and Damnation, which in the Hurry of his Passions perhaps forces him to dispatch himfelf. But if the black Blood shall chance to be fweetned by a mixture of better, and if the Violence of his Passions is abated. he begins to conceive better Hopes. And if he shall chance to recover from this Fever, to that his Blood does again glide after its due Manner, he concludes that all is well with him. For that very Exercise, ( to use their own Stile ) which had almost driven him to Despair, and to commit Suicide, and was of the same Kind with that which made others actually prove their own Executioners, This Exercise, I say, he ascribes to the Operation of the Holy Ghoft, and perfwades himself that the work of Grace is begun in his Soul. Then that Imagination which was so horribly darkned, is lusciously affected, and these Passions which were driving him to Despair, receive a quite contrary Byass; so that he, who was formerly finking under Melancholy, has his Head railed above the Clouds; and he whose Language was once of Death and Damnation, talks of no less than the Illapses and Extalies, with which the bleffed Spirit does ravish his Soul; when all the while he was only acted by his own Animal For were not these Exercises as frequent

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ment as ever, when disguised Villains are faid o have preached in their Field Conventicles: And that Son of Perdition, Major Weir, did, no doubt. pray those who joined with him into Raptures. and wrought in them these Animal Fervours. which they and others mistook for the Influences of the Holy Ghoft. And I have known fome, that ridical'd the mechanical Converfions, who were so much Masters of the Crafis of their Bodies, that they could work themselves into these Exercises. They knew what Musick would most effectually move their Spirits, and could modulate their Voices accordingly; they could twist their Faces into all the pious Grimaces, which are some of the Signs of Grace, by which those of that Way distinguish themselves from the ungodly; and could express themselves so passionately in the canting Gibberish, which is the holy Language of the Party, that the credulous People would reverence them as the very Vehicles of the Spirit, and conclude from the uncommon Fervours of their own Spirits, that they themselves were by their Means inspired with the Holy Ghoft, when the whole was undeniably a most wretched Delusion: Nay, so fusceptible are they of such Animal Impressions, that an Ode of Horace devoutly chanted, will pais for one of the Psalms of David, and move some of their Devout Women to equal Transports.

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Did not the Prejudices, which I know they uncharitably entertain against me, give me too good Ground to fear that any Advice of mine would be lost upon them; I would here expostulate with them, who place the Life of Religion in meer Animal Heats, and sound their Hopes of Happiness upon so Chimerical a Foundation; so very Chimerical, that the most vain and santastick Inclinations are as well sounded.

For, if my designed Brevity did not hinderit, Icould particularize some of these Inclinations that are most intimate to Men, and which they most unreasonably indulge, and could run an exact Parallel betwixt these and the religious Freaks of the Presbyterian Converts, and account for both after the same Manner. For when there are prevailing Inclinations rooted in Mens Constitutions, they readily employ the Mechanical Powers, which will carry them a greatLength, and fometimes perform marvellous Feats, without any foreign Aid. How many can attest the Truth of this from their own Experience? And whoever wants to be furnished with a Variety of Instances to this purpose, may consult Huarte's Tryal of Wits, where they shall find a pretty large Induction of as surprising Effects produced by the mere Force of Fancy and Mechanism, any they can name in the whole Progress of the Animal Religion.

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Having given these general Hints, I am resolved to dispense with my self from writing a
Lecture on the Animal OEconomy, or accounting
for these Phænomena mechanically; and therefore referring this Performance to those who
have more Skill, or till I have more Leisure,
I proceed to try the Presbyterian Spirit by its
Fruits, and to disprove it from its Opposition
to the Spirit of the Gospel; a Disquisition more
familiar, and better suited to the Design of this
plain Treatise, than the other, and a Trial
which they cannot reasonably decline.

As then the Spirit of the Gospel discovered it self to be truly Divine, not only by the Miracles, but likewise by the excellent Precepts and suitable Practice of Christ and his Apostles; so the Presbyterian Spirit bewrays its Opposition too plainly by its contrary Effects.

The Spirit of Christ and his Apostles was highly Rational; for such is the System of Religion which they taught. They adopted and improved upon these Principles which were universally received among Men, and such as must ravish the Assent of all rational Minds, how soon they are proposed. The Sermon on the Mount, which is an admirable Abstract of the Christian Morale, is a Demonstration to this purpose: And the the few superadded Articles are such as transcend our Reason; yet are they attended with Credentials, which may satisfy

fatisfy the most obstinate Infidel, that they are a navignor a

not contrary to it.

But the Presbyterian Spirit scorns to be fer tered by Reason, it chooses rather to exert it felf at large, and to discover its Freedom aftera Manner which paffeth all natural Understanding. For what do their most admir'd practical Systems contain, but the very Dreg of Mysticifm, and a Jargon no less unintelligible, than that of Facob Behmen or Molino, which they may well pretend to understand themselves, but I am fure none else can, nor shall they be ever able to fatisfy the most impartial and inquisitive Minds about it.

For, they tell a long but senseless Story of the Manner of God's dealing with the Souls of his Elect; how the work of Grace is carried on there, and how their Regeneration is com-They talk strange things of their Manifestations and Desertions, and of the Marks by which the Sincere Converts are distinguished from those who are still in the State of corrupt Nature. They feem to refolve much of the Spirit of Religion into Animal Agitations, luscious Feryours, and amorous Recumbencies; fothat if I can guess at their Thoughts in this Matter (which indeed is hard to do in a Point foremote from common Sense ) they seem to think that they'll recommend themselves to God after the very same Manner as to their Mistresses.

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201 This is their Scheme of Religion, but it is in Truth such a Romantick one, that (I am perswaded ) Nature, or some Accident, does modify their Brains after a very fingular Manper, e're they can seriously embrace it: And yet so sond are they of it, (tho' it be at best but a religious Amusement) that they sound all their Hopes of Happiness upon it. It naturally begets in them too favourable an Opinion of themselves and their State, and such mean Thoughts of others, that they are pleafed superciliously to pity them as unhappy Wretches,: who are absolute Strangers to the Grace of God. Nor are these the only mischeivous Consequences of this fatal Delusion. a greater still follows, which is, that it tempts them too much to neglect Christian Morality, as too flat and unworthy of Men of their Perfection, to their own great Loss, and the Scandal and Disadvantage of others. For the it was the only Subject of the first and longest Sermon our Lord ever preached, as it was the main Exercise of his most holy Life; yet are their Sermons commonly of another Strain: They feldom recommend any of the Duties enjoined there, some they never mention, and as little practife. They are content that these severer Duties should exercise the Lungs and Lives of the Episcopal Moralists; and indeed they have frequently given them too much Occasion to do both. However, this much

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they and the World gain thereby, that it plainly distinguishes the Spirit of both Parties. and demonstrates the one to be endued with the Spirit of the Gospel, and that the other The Spirit of the one exerts it felf to the Satisfaction of manly Reason, and to the Advantage of Society; it contributes to the Improvement of our rational Faculties, and the Performance of these Duties by which we imit te the moral Perfection of the divine Na. ture, and recover that Image which we had lost: Whereas the Spirit of the other shuns all Encounters with Reason, for they never meet but the one or the other suffers: It contents it self with its own Mysteries, which are but the Cobweb of the Fancy, and the Product of the Animal Spirits. And as the Party owe their pretended Inspirations to the Agitation of these, so their main Business is to raise the Passions of others: An Art which they so throughly understand, that they whose Pas-sions sway their Judgments, and particularly the Females, are fo readily determined their Way. A ferious Air, and a whineing Voice charms them. Thus it is that their Lovers gull them, and so do their Preachers.

But, will some perhaps say, If the Spirit of Presbytery be so Fantastical, whence is it that the Party has wrought it self to such a Consistency; and that so many, and not a few Men of Sense, own themselves to be of that

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Way? The unfolding of this Mystery, will yield us a further discovery of the Spirit of that Party, and therefore I shall briefly enquire into it. Christianity is such a rational System of Religion, that its native Excellency alone supports it, and is sufficient to recommend it to all who are not Proof against Conviction. Hence it is that our bleffed Lord and his Followers did not make use of any sneaking Art to gain Profelytes; Nor did they extend their Conquests by the edge of the Sword. For as they themselves were fully convinced of the Truth of their Doctrine, so they were able to convince others, as well by Arguments drawn from the Nature of the Thing, as by the Motives of Belief, which they so plentifully afforded. They first endeavoured to inform Mens Judgments, and what of the Passions was necessary in Religion, that Reason employed and directed aright: Whereas they who advance new Schemes pursue a quite contrary Method. Not to mention other Schismaticks or Hereticks of former or later Times, We find that the Presbyterians, who know too well that Reason will not serve their Purpose, begin with the Passions, which lead the Understandings of too many captive. With them the Fury of Zeal supplyes the want of Reason, and does more Execution among the unthinking Mobb, than the strongest Demonstrations. They exhaust their Lungs in passionate and C C 2 po-

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popular Harangues against their honest Neigh bours, who think it unworthy of Men or Christians, to use such mean Arts. They confidently appropriate to themselves the Epithets of the truly Godly, &c. and brand those who differ from them with the Marks of Reprobation, only by mifapplying fome Texts of Scripture, which gull the deluded People, tho they be as far from the Purpole as the East is from the West. They identify Presbytery and the Interest of Christ, in so far that they call our blesfed Lord a Presbyterian, and some of them have preached and printed that he died a Martyr for that Caufe; while at the same Time, the Bishops are Limbs of Antichrist, and all their Adherents Children of Perdition.

No wonder then, tho' the poor People who know no better, are frightned into a Complyance with their Way; especially when they confine the Grace of Conversion, and consequently Election to their Party. For who would not wish to share of that Grace, and be of the Number of the Elect, who shall only inherit eternal Life? All which being urged with their peculiar Vehemency, and backed with an affected Preciseness of Conversation, perswades those who see no further than the surface of Things, that they are not only in Earnest, but in the Right, and that there is no Salvation for them out of that Way. This sufficiently secures them to the Party, tho' they

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they have never been passive of, but are daily expecting these uncommon Animal Fervours ( fo wretchedly militaken for the Work of Conversion ) which are indeed the main Charm that bewitches fo many, whose Constitutions admir of them, into so great a liking of that Way. They perswade themselves, that they are owing to the Operations of the Holy Ghoft. that their Teachers, who occasioned them, are the Servants of God, and that they ought to receive whatever they utter as his Oracles. And as they are thus unhappily deceived themselves. fo they again deceive others. Their Devotional Melancholy discovers it felf, in the Air of their Countenances, by their luccious Discourses of the Love of God and Chrift, and of their fweet Communion with the Father and the Son, in a word, by the Singularity of their whole Conduct, which weak (tho' well meaning) People mistake for Signs of Grace; and determines them to reverence these as eminent Saints, and to conclude that the Cause which they own is certainly the best.

And if these Fanatical Pietists are also Female (which they generally are, the Party baving been early taught that they are most easily attacked) then they exert their Passions, which are naturally keen, to Purpose; they are naturally talkative, and so fill all Places with the noise of their religious Attainments; and are so impatient of Contradiction, that a Regard

to Peace and good Manners does filence their peaceable and discreet Neighbours. Thele are the fworn Servants of the Party, which these Creepers into Houses have led captive; they are Tools which they know how to manage to the Advantage of the Good Cause; They en. flame their Zeal and employ it dextroufly upon all with whom they may have Interest, that can do them Service; especially their Husbands, who if they be cafe about Matters of Religion (which too many are) they'll fuffer themselves to be determined by them in a Matter which they believe to be indifferent; especially if it does not interfere with, but rather contribute to the advancement of their Interests. And tho we should suppose that thy are not easily byaffed, yet are they fo teafed by these charming Tempters, that they at length become a Prey to their bewitching Importunities; and when they have once compleated the Conquest, their Confessors provide them with all the necessary Instructions, according to which the hen-peckt Husbands must act abroad, as they shall be anfwerable to their Constituents at Home.

Thus some of the greatest Masters of Reason, may be prevailed upon to own that Party; they may after some Time, chance to be so hardned by Custom, that they can gravely harken to the most ridiculous Rhapsodies, and perhaps suffer themselves to be moved by meer Cant and Grimace; while their Authority and

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heHopes of recommending themselves, foreibly letermine their Dependents to an Imitation.

Others there are among them, who are naturally endued with a large Stock of good Sense, who perhaps owe all their Religion to the Instructions of their biggoted Tutors of Parents; and therefore knowing no better, adhere to the Principles of their Education.

While others of the same Stamp, finding the Presbyterian Scheme, which they had implicitly embraced, contradict plain Reason and common Sense, heartily despise it; but being unacquainted with a better, and perhaps too lazy to make further Enquiries, conclude, that seeing this Scheme, which they thought to be the true one, is most certainly false, there is no such Thing as true Religion in the World; However, they may in Prudence, or in Compliment to their zealous Friends, make open Profession of the Religion of their Fathers, especially if it be in Fashion and can serve their Designs.

So that, notwithstanding the Number and Quality of their Professors, the Spirit of the Party actually is opposite to the rational Spirit of the Gospel.

Nor is this the only Instance of their Opposition; for as the Spirit of our Lord was most rational, so it was generous and publick, but their Spirit is narrow and mean. He died for all Men, and they confine the Merit of his his Death to a predestinated few. He meant, that his Grace should extend universally, which they restrain to their own Party. His Charity relieved all Men indifferently, Enemies as well as Friends, and He peremptorly enjoined his Followers to do the like; while their Byass visibly Iways them to favour the Godly, that is,

thole of their own Way.

They are naturally rigid and severe, and therefore conclude, that God is such a one as themselves; they damn all who differ from them, and therefore think that God does the fame; and because they love themselves; they are pleased to perswade themselves that they are his special Favorites. In a word, they are Respecters of Persons, and therefore think to patronize their Partiality with his Authority. Hence they conclude, that they owe them no Civilities whom God neglects; nor kind Offices whom he hates: He neglects and hates all who are not capable of his Grace, which none are ( fay they ) who are not of their Way. This wicked Perswasion sanctifies not only the ill Manners, but which is worse, the ill nature of the Party, towards all who. It contradicts the Ends of differ from them. Society and Government, and is only calculated to advance the private Interest of a partial

So charitable was the Spirit of our Lord, that he has declared the Forgiveness of Injuries

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the divine Forgivnels. He himself (as did the bleffed Martyr St. Stephen) employed some of his last Breath in praying for the Forgivnels of his Murtherers; whereas they ridiculously conclude, that their Enemies are God's Enemies, and wickedly argue, that they are therefore priviledged to hate them. Hence it is that their rehelious Marryrs never express they thought were done them by their supposed Perfecuters: Their last Speeches so sathfully recorded in Naprhali, and so much admired by the Party, containing rather too plain Indications of the Malice and Rancour of their Souls, when they were stepping in to Evernity; a Demonstration of the Opposition of their Spirit to that of the Gosfoel.

The Spirit of our Lord likewife discovered it fell by his free and easie Conversation. For his Desire of doing good, carryed him into the Company of the Men of loofe, as well as regular Lives. Whence the precise and hypocritical Pharifees took occasion to call him, a Man glutonous, and a Wine-biber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners. After the same Manner do our modern Puritans (who value them selves upon the Sullenness of their Tempers, the Preciseness of their Manners, and their Distance

Stance from the Wicked, upbraid their more the frank and innocent Neighbours. And, as the bleffed Jesus did thus exert his charitable Spirit towards all Men, fo he eminently diffringuished himself by his regard for those in Authority: He knew that the CE Doctrine of Obedience did highly contribute to the Welfare of Society, and was to agreeable to the Will of his heavenly Father, that he made it a part of his divine Institution. He commanded to render to Cafar the Things that Į. are Cofar's, as well as to God the Things that are God's, and wrought a Miracle to pay the publick Tribute: St. Paul requires Subjection, ander no less Penalty than Damnation : And St. Peter commands us to bonour the King, as well as to fear God, and argues the Necessity of submitting to the Froward, as well as 23 to the Gentle. The primitive Christians, 80 Light who were to eminently endued with the Spirit of the Golpel, and so exactly knew the Mind MI of Obrist and his Apostles, distinguished themin! felves likewife by their Loyalty: For tho 'erl they had the greatest Temptations to rebel, we they rather choose to suffer the most horrid Cruelties, for maintaining the best of Causes, than damn themselves by Rebel-

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Dilloya But the Presbyterians distinguish themselves on the contrary, by their difloyal Principles and Practices. That the People are the Fountain 0

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of Power, and that Princes are accountable. are darling and fundamental Principles of theirs. For is not Buchanan's Treatile De Jure Regni, which at first debauched fo many of our Nation with these damnable Principles, still an Oracle among them? As is also Rutherfoord's Lex Rex, tho' (if we shall exexact Transcript of Mariana's execrable Book De Rege & Regis Institutione. And the they have been to often upbraided with the horrid Principles of Napthali and the Hind let loofe, and folemnly challenged to condemn, otherwise to be accounted Abetters of them. They have not to this Day branded them with any publick Censure, but did suffer them to be imported from Holland, and publickly fold; and are as often feen on the Tables of their most zealous Votaries as the Holy Bible: Nay, fuch was the Reputation of the known Author of the Hind let loofe, among them, tho' he ought to have been banished all Society, that they fixed him near one of our most famous Univerfires, that he might preach the Youth into these Principles; and when an extraordinary Occasion offered they commissioned him as their Apostle to propagate the same, to the end of the Earth. Lese . Le Davien James James

And the' they should disclaim these extravagant Authors, yet does the Course of their Actions too much bewray the rebellious Spirit air of the Party. With them, the Rule and only

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Reafon of Obedience is, That Princes favour them; so that it is not Conscience but Interest that determines them to obey; as it is fufficient to constitute a Tyrrant, and to fanctify a Rebellion, that they are not suffered to trie umph. For if that very Prince, whom they once obeyed, shall frown upon them, they'll let him know with a Witness, that their Alledgiance is dissolved. Volumes have been, and some more might be written to prove this. However, I shall only offer some Hints, by which the Reader may eafily discover their cloven Foot. They were no fooner hatched than they rebelled. For how furiously did their wicked Spirit exert it felf against the unfortunate Queen Mary, whose Reputation they blackned, whose Authority and Government they refifted and reviled, whose Person they imprifoned, and whom they obliged to fly, in hopes to fave that Life which the cruelly loft? What Vexations and Disturbances they occasioned while King James VI was in Scotland, he himself complains. And the Union of the Crowns, and the peaceable Reign of that Prince hindred them from breaking out into open Rebellion; yet did not the Spirit depart from that small Remnant that survived him! It was fecretly gathering Strength, and waited only a proper Occasion to exert it felf ; and when this offered, it broke out like Fire long pent up, into the greater Flame, and did

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did to much the more Mischief under the Reign of the best of Kings, and perhaps the best of Men, King Charles I. They entred into a folern Covenant, that is, a treasonable Combina 151.181 tion, to overturn the established Church in this Nation, and to do the like in England and Ireland, where they were not at all concerned. 'Tis true they promise to preserve and defend the King's Person and Authority, but it is only in the Preservation of the true Religion and Liberties of the Kingdom, which in effect resolves in this, That they'll own and defend him, if he shall do what they please. This plainly was their Sense; for when a Person of his great Sense, Piety and Honour, and of his tender Conscience, could not comply with all their imperious, unreasonable and wicked Demands, they took Sword in Hand to oblige him thereto They concurred with their fellow Rebels in England, at least they did not assist the King against them, as his other loyal Subjects did. And to give a full Demonstration of their Disloyalty, they betrayed him into the Hands of his Enemies, when he had entrusted them with his facred Person. In a word, the Scors Levi's not only began the Great Rebellion. but did likewise so wickedly act their Part in conjunction with the English Simeons, that they at last rendred him uncapable to defend himself. and drove him to the last Extremity; So that, tho' the Independents gave the fatal Blow, the Presby-

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Presbyterians certainly put him in their Power. Thus it is that their Friend Salmafius theres the Crime between them, in his Defensio Regia, Presbyteriani (lays he) ligarunt, Independentes vero immolarunt sacrificium. And shall they think that the sham Protestation which a few of them entred against the King's Murther will excuse their Accession to it? No, it rather aggravates their Guilt, who in Pursuance of the Design of their Covenant, brought Matters to that pass that his Death was unavoidable. Nor shall they be ever able to purge themselves from the Guilt of this innocent Blood, while they maintain the Principle which necessarly resolves into such a horrid Fact. They maintain that Princes are accountable, and may be deposed upon Male-Administration; and when they become private Perfons, why should not Justice be put in Execution against them, as well as against the meaneit Malefactor?

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But will they perhaps fay, our Loyalty to the Son, did fufficiently attone for our Rebellion against the Father; feeing we invited him home, crowned him, and fought The Truth of these Things cannot indeed be denyed, but we may reasonably doubt, that they were the Effects of any conscientious Loyalty. For the other Sectaries, and particularly the Independents had by that time lotar gained the Ascendant in the favour of the Usurper, that they were ungratefully neglected; Presbytry was then railed against, after the very manner, which they themselves used once to revile the Church, and the Solema League and Covenant (the Badge of the Party) was an Almanack out of Date. This heartily vexed them, who thought they deserved to be better rewarded; it animated their fiery Zeal, or rather inspired them with a defire of Revenge. Then indeed, when they found that the King was a necessary Tool to engage his loyal Subjects to fight the Battles of the Lord, some covenanted Deputies entred into Treaty with him; they endeayoured to secure him by forced Promises to maintain Presbytery, and the covenanted Work of Reformation, tho' they well knew he had all the Reason in the World to dislike both, as the unhappy Causes of the greatel

greatest Disasters of his Illustrious Family; and yet, had he refused any of these Conditions, the Presbyterian Loyalty was instantly at an End. And that this Instance of their pretended Loyalty was no Sign of their Repentance for their former Rebellion, but that they were rather serving their own private Ends, is hence evident, that, during the very time of the Treaty, they were haraffing and murthering his faithful Subjects; and particularly caused execute his Lieutenant General the Great Montrose. with his Commission about his Neck. Rare Loyalists. who at the fame time that they are tendering their Submission to the Sovereign, barbarously condemn his most loyal Subject as a Traitor! However, the State of his Affairs obliged the King to conceal his Resentment for so rebellious an Affront, and to submit to all the unreafonable Conditions which they were pleased to require. the Performance of which they rigorously exact when he came to Scotland: but when they found him not fo zealous as themselves, in advancing their extravagant Deligns, they let him to wit, by the famous Act of the West-Kirk, That they will not own him nor his Interest, otherwife than with a Subordination to God, and so far as he owns and profecutes the Caufe of God, and disclaims his and his Father's Opposition to the work of God and the Covenant; and they plainly threaten to harken to some Overtures proposed by Cromwell, if he did not go thorough flitch with them in all their Measures; and when upon the faral Battle of Worcester, they thought he could not be of farther use to them, they translated their Allegiance to the execrable Usurper, and continued dutiful and loyal Subjects to him, and after his Death to his Son, until it pleafed God miraculously to interpose in behalf of the King; then indeed their Envoys appear among the first, to make folemn and most zealous Profession of Loyalty; but he knew them too well ever to believe or trust them. And tho', when he might have justly punished many of them as Traytors, he only clemently removed the rebellious Kirk, that he might restore the loyal Church to the full and free Exercise of its Catholick Rights; They revile his Person and Government, they endeavour to sow Sedition

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( 216 ) among his loyal Subjects, and they actually rife in Rebellion against him. It is in vain to charge a desperate few with the Guilt, when the whole Party were engaged, if not personally, yet will the Consciences of all the Presty. serians then living, bear Witness against them, that they contributed to it, either by their Prayers, Advice, Intereft, or Money: And do not they put this Matter out of doubt, when to this Day they who died in the Rebellion are reckoned among their Martyrs? Nor will it ever wipe off the Imputation of their Disloyalty, that they have given no Disturbance under the present, or the last Reign. Had they lived peaceably under King Charles II. when that Prince thought they did not deserve his Fayour, this might have past for one Instance of their conscientious Loyalty; but that they do not rebel when their Interest obliges them to live in Peace, will never convince me, that they would not, if put to the Trial, play the old Game (tho', I doubt not, unfuccessfully) even against their Benefactors.

These are some of the Instances by which the Presby. serian Spirit discovers its Opposition to the Spirit of the Gospel, to which many more might be added, particularly the Spirit of Division, with which they are possessed, which of all others is the most opposite to the very Design of Christianity. It drives them from the Communion of the Church, and cuts them off from the ordinary Communications of the Holy Ghoft; and when they are from under the Conduct of that Spirit, their own Spirit throws them ( like the Demoniack in the Gospel ) fometimes into the Fire, and off into the Water. They think their pretence to a further degree of Reformation, will excuse their Extravagancies, that it privileges them to flander their Catholick Neighbours, and to exert their Ill Nature in a special Manner against their Ecclesiakical Superiors. They pry into their Lives, and aggravate their Frailties, they gladly harken to, readily believe, and zealously propagate the most idle, false, and malicious Stories of them; nay, to such a Height of Madness, has this evil Spirit carried their Schismatical Priests in Conjunction with those who had no. Title to the Priest hood, that they have trod under Foot the Bishops of the Church Che the felv Att to St.

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Church, and have pretended to Excommunicate, while they were without the Communion of the Church themfelves: As the same Spirit animated them to make some Attempts upon the Lives of Bishops, and barbarously to Murther that venerable old Man, the Arch Bishop of St. Andrews. And when their Spirit exerted it felf thus furiously when it was pretty well restrained, how violently may we suppose would it employ it self, when Providence suffered them to triumph. And accordingly we find, that they not only suffered their rascally Mobb to rabble fome hundreds of honest Ministers without any Redress; but even their Kirk Judicatories, at least during the first Twelve Years of their Domination. were little else than a continued Inquisition; They encouraged a godly Webster living in one Parish. and a sanctified Cobler lurking in another, (after having dubbed them ruling Elders ) to form or forge Libles against their lawful Pastors. The course of their Lives was narrowly enquired into, the least Frailty was reckoned a capital Crime, and the flenderest and most partial Evidence was probative against them, and was a relevant Ground of Depolition. How many learned Men have they deposed for gross Ignorance, Orthodox Men for fundamental Errors, Pious Men for scandalous Immoralities, and Men indefatigably zealous for supine Negligence; but this is a Subject too large and lamentable, and to well known in this Nation to be further infifted upon. And what I have hinted at, fufficiently demonstrates what manner of Spirit they are of, and how necessary it is to separate from them, in order to thun its Infection.

I shall only add, upon a serious Review of the whole, That as my Conscience does bear me Witness, so I hope the Reader will be convinced by my Narrative that I pursued my Enquiries with all due exactness and impartiality, and was determined by Arguments each of which separately, much more all jointly, were sufficient to warrant such a Change. For if the want of that Form of Government, which constitutes the Presbyterians Schismaticks; if their imposing false, Dangerous, &c. Opi-

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nion, as articles of Faith; if the obliging People to join in a Worship which is scandalously corrupt, as to its Matter, and highly imperfect as to its Manner, and if the pretending to the Influences of the Holy Ghost, when their Spirit does in too many Instances bewray its Opposition to the Spirit of the Gospel, If all these, I say, are Reasons sufficient to warrant a Separation, then did I lawfully separate from the Presbyterian Party, Q. B. D.

## FINIS.



The Reader is defired to Correct the following, and and such like Errors of the Press.

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